

# **Horizon**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART**

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**JOHN DONNE AND THE BAROQUE DOUBT**

*by* KATHLEEN RAINE

**LETTER FROM PARIS**

*by* NANCY CUNARD

**GLIMPSES OF GERMANY—I**

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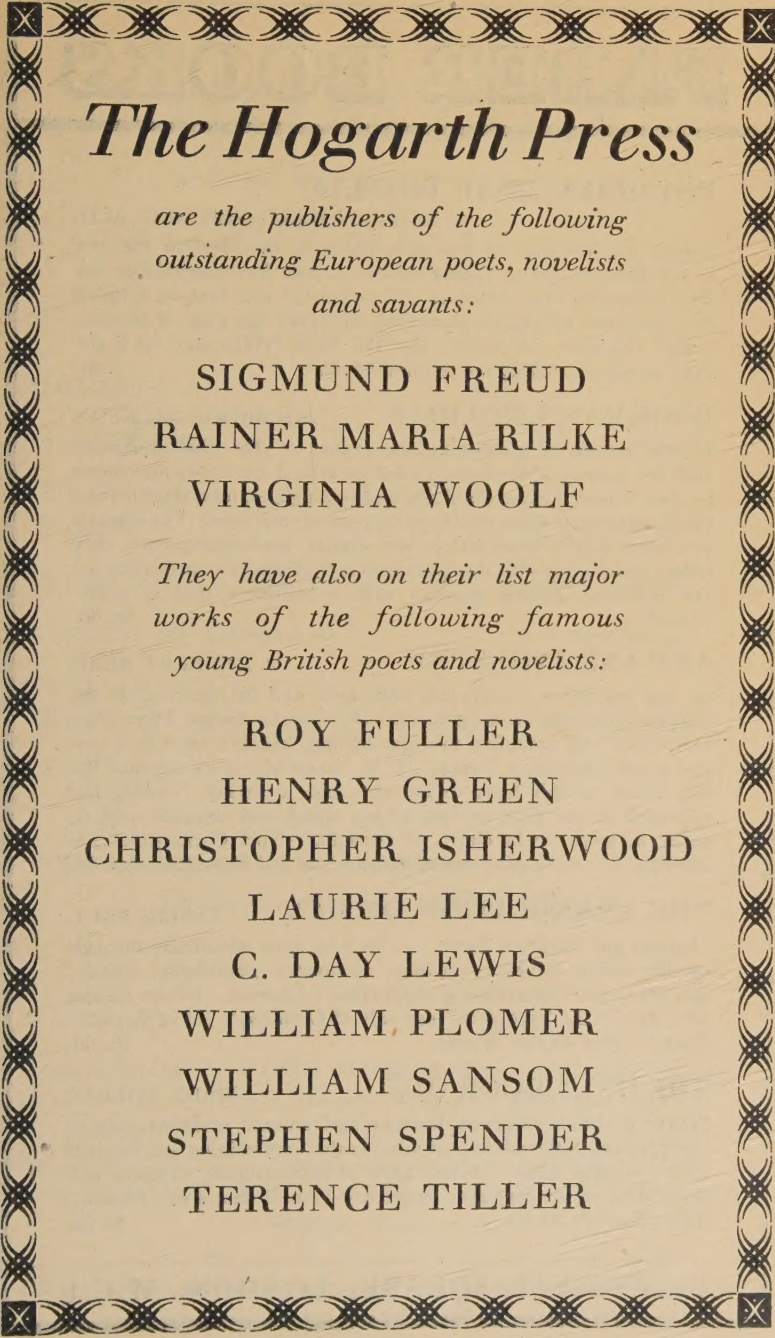
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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

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# COMMENT

HORIZON is a war-baby: this is our first number to be produced in a Europe at peace. For sixty-six months we have been waiting for this moment. HORIZON has always hated war; but it is not pacifist, for it has hated fascism more, and therefore recognized the value of that patriotism which derives from the healthy human desire to protect our liberties and to fight for our country against an invader. This patriotism is a biological instinct. But when such patriotism becomes an aggressive nationalism and the threatened becomes the threatener, the enslaved the enslaver, it must be combated with all the weapons of emotion and reason, and this nationalism is now the universal danger. Peace on earth, ill-will to all men. How different from the peace we have all longed for and dreamt of during these six years of hate and boredom, of fear and suffering! I remember being haunted by a line of La Fontaine, in his poem celebrating the Treaty of the Pyrenees:

‘que les plus grands de nos maux  
soient les rigueurs de nos belles!’

Faint hope. *Homo homini lupus*. What do we see? In place of that United States of Europe of which we dreamed we watch a new Great Wall of China being erected across its centre. In place of those liberal or socialist democracies in which we put our faith, we see kings and generals disputing tottering thrones on one side of the wall, iron totalitarian régimes coming into being on the other. Where Europe ceases and Islam begins the Great Powers squat angrily on Arabs and oil-fields, the Indian gaols are full, and beyond them the Chinese fight and starve, while the Japanese pay the deserved and terrible penalty for the use they have made of the industrialism which once was forced upon them. At the same time in one or two countries men struggle towards peace and begin to recover a sanity which we hope is infectious. For the first time for ten years we have a vote; we are free in the next few days to decide on what kind of chains we shall wear. I hold a proxy for a friend in Italy and am going to use it for Labour. If I really thought that the situation were desperate, and that—carried on by the general gadarene impetus of nationalism, suspicion, greed and new explosives—we would be at war again in a few years I should vote Conservative, for they can best protect us,



and if there is one man to whom I owe it that I am not in a concentration camp, his name is Winston Churchill. But is the situation so desperate? Can those of us in England, America, France, Russia, China and the rest of Europe who believe in love, life and freedom communicate our sanity, our happiness and our liberty to the incredulous, to the under privileged of head and heart? Now is the time for those of us who are natural pacifists, yet compelled by our hatred of tyranny and by biological necessity to support the war once again to proclaim our principles—that human life is sacred, that killing is no remedy for killing nor hatred for hatred, that happiness is indivisible and consists in the liberty to grow, that all human beings are sentenced to death and that as the sentence will never be commuted, we are all entitled to the courtesies of the condemned cell, just as being all members of that most exclusive institution, the *club des vivants*, we are all privileged to enjoy the amenities of the spherical reading room which is our world. Life is sweet and may we never forget it!

It is because I believe this that I shall give my proxy to Labour. I think many Tories believe it too. Yet to make England a happy country, there must be a levelling up which socialism alone will provide; we cannot continue to maintain two utterly different standards of living. Then to make us really free there must be governments who don't like secret police or 'glasshouses' or uniforms or telephone-tapping or dossier-making—as at the anarchist's trial—from visitors' identity cards; we must be administered by people who will root out, like lumps of dry rot, the foci of fascism by which in our struggle against it we have become infected. I do not agree with the Prime Minister that socialism leads to the Gestapo. It was a conservative government which condoned Hitler, Franco and Mussolini and their horrible methods. And when it comes to foreign policy I think that Bevin and Morrison are just as able to negotiate as Eden and Beaverbrook, and, judging from Bevin's speech with its emphasis on free trade and internationalism, are more likely to create the kind of Europe in which I believe, a Europe without passports, tariffs, cops and armies, without kings and dictators, without barracks full of Senegalese and dungeons full of artists, and to which England belongs by inheritance, for it is half the privilege of being English to have access to other men's weather, to the civilization of France, Greece or Italy, the mountains of



Switzerland and Austria, and not least—and this is where Labour can help me—to the sunshine of Spain.

There is one more question which all voters who love the human spirit should ask themselves: Who will do most for the arts in England? I find for example that nearly all of our subscribers who are Members of Parliament are Conservatives, and important ones; they swallow our pink pills with stoic grace! Labour's record of assistance to the artist is lamentable. It seems to regard Art as a complicated secret weapon of the rich. In our greatest difficulties we were most helped by men like Harold Nicolson (National Labour) and Duff Cooper. The Liberal contribution to *HORIZON* is also honourable, and I would certainly use my proxy for that Party if I thought their candidate had the best chance of being elected. One thing is certain. England is now part of Europe: in Europe two instincts have long been at work, a desire for unity, and an urge to the left. If we do not guide these instincts to fruition (and only a liberal or socialist England will give the lead), the United States of Europe will be created without us.

Well, time will show: if as usual the pin-stripe pants, city faces and rolled umbrellas are returned, we shall scold them; if the men of Blackpool about whom we know so much less are for once elected, we shall lecture them as well—for though the war in Europe is over, *HORIZON*'s battle is hardly begun. And here it is right to recall the names of some of those who have been killed in this war and who were on our side; on the side of life, beauty, art and intelligence, and against all littleness and bloody-mindedness. Robert Byron, drowned on his way to Egypt; Antony Goldsmith, killed in Tunisia; Rollo Woolley, shot down in the air above it; Alun Lewis, who died in India, all four contributors; and those three young fighter pilots who were such friends to each other and to us, Gully Mason, Michael Jones and Bill Siprell.

'A florecer las rosas madrugaron  
y para envejecerse florecieron—  
cuna y sepulcro en un botón hallaron.  
Tales los hombres sus fortunas vieron' . . .

## BENEDETTO CROCE

### INSCRIPTION

(Composed at the request of an American who sought out Croce at Sorrento and expressed to him the wish to erect a memorial stone in the cemetery at Caiazzo.)

Presso Caiazzo  
Nel luogo detto San Giovanni e Paolo  
alcune famiglie campagnuole  
rifugiate in una stessa casa  
furono il XIII Ottobre MCMXLIII  
fucilate e mitragliate  
per ordine di un giovane ufficiale Prussiano  
uomini donne infanti  
ventitre umili creature  
non d'altro colpevoli  
che di avere inconscie  
alla domanda dove si trovasse il nemico  
additato a lui senz'altro la via  
verso la quale si erano volti I tedeschi.

Improvvisa uscì dalle loro labbra  
la parola di verità  
designando non l'umano avversario  
nelle umane guerre  
ma l'atroce presente nemico  
dell'umanità.

William H. Stoneman  
giornalista Americano  
che vide con orrore e pietà le salme degli uccisi  
pone questa memoria.

'In Caiazzo, at the place called SS. John and Paul, several families of country-folk taking refuge under the same roof were, on 13 October, 1943, shot down with rifles and machine guns by the orders of a young Prussian officer, men, women, children, twenty-three humble creatures, for no other fault than having thoughtlessly, on being asked where the enemy lay, pointed out to him the direction in which the Germans had turned. Unrehearsed came to their lips the word of truth, indicating not the human adversary of human wars but the vile enemy of mankind who stood before their eyes. William H. Stoneman, American journalist, who saw with horror and pity the bodies of those killed, erected this memorial.'

[Translated by G. RAYNER HEPPENSTALL]



KATHLEEN RAINE

## JOHN DONNE AND THE BAROQUE DOUBT

IT is now for an entire literary generation that the metaphysical poets have seemed to have the clue to our own situation. It is not difficult to see why. For we, probably the most unhappy, and certainly the most torn by conflict, of all the generations since the seventeenth century, have to make a choice, as they had, between the desirable but doomed, and the less desirable but inevitable. To make a choice, or to find a solution. Whether one sees in Baroque art a resolved or an unresolved conflict, a consideration of what that conflict essentially was, cannot fail to compel our respect for the intellectual courage, not to say heroism, of the poet John Donne, who among other great figures of the Baroque period felt its full impact, and held in equipoise, even if only for a moment, those forces of change that in a few years transformed the medieval into the modern world.

His was essentially an intellectual heroism—for even the intellectual can have his heroic age, and that is precisely the case of the metaphysical poets. For it is not for being clever or learned that we admire Donne and his school but for their courage in never deluding themselves as to the implications of the two—often more than two—sides to every problem (reflected in the verbal ambiguities characteristic of the metaphysical poets); their refusal to be blinded by emotion to things of the mind; or by reason to things of the heart; to let anything make them forget how much it takes to make a whole man. For *metaphysical*, as has often been pointed out, is a wholly misleading word. Metaphysical poetry is the least abstract, most concrete of all poetry. Thought permeates every emotion, every physical sensation, and our bodies

‘are ours, though they are not wee, Wee are  
the intelligences, they the spheares’.

(‘The spheares’, that is, in a universe in which, though Copernicus had effected some changes, he had not deposed God from His seat at the centre, as the ‘prime mover’ of the solar system.) But

conversely, ideas themselves are experienced with almost physical ardour. Donne, who loved women with his wits, loved God with his senses.

'Intellectual' in this century has become a term in economics. 'Workers, peasants, and intellectuals', as the Russians say. To be an intellectual is not, necessarily, to be intelligent, or to be well informed. It may even be a sort of disease—ideas, like germs, being infectious—to be incapable of experiencing anything without the excitement of the mind, and usually the verbal part of the mind, playing a part in it. In love or death, in war or prayer, the intellect plays its part. And with the intellect, always, comes scepticism.

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Those who saw the turn of the sixteenth century, saw the passing of the Renaissance into the first dawning of the centuries of the Common Man, in the beginnings of Puritanism; they saw the last, superb expression of the ancient faith in Spanish Baroque art, and the Spanish Baroque saints; the highest point ever attained in Christian mysticism, in the period of Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint John of the Cross (both also poets) came late in the sixteenth century. Saint Teresa died in 1582, St. John in 1591. But Copernicus had already set the round earth in motion, and the little world of his new astronomy was already a diminished part in an expanding universe, and Europe itself a diminishing part of a world in which America was already appearing on the western horizon. The medieval world and the modern, the setting and the rising stars, were in the sky together, for those who would to compare the values that had shaped the human world of the past, with those that were to shape its future. We ourselves, in a similar sadly privileged position, are well fitted to understand the basis from which arose Baroque art.

As the rift between the spiritual and the material values widened, the Great picked sides. England was then the great protagonist of the modern, Spain of the ancient, order. And in this polarity, English thought and poetry were strongly influenced by Spanish for the first and last time in history. The metaphysical poets are the fruits of this close contact with Spain, and that at a time when both countries were in their golden age.

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In Spain, the great souls, confronted with the widening



rift between material and spiritual orders, still chose the spiritual measure of life, even if it meant rejecting the earth, and all material things, since these seemed worthless, save in the context of the spiritual order of medieval Christianity. This is the meaning of the impulse, hard for the average human being of the twentieth century to understand, that sent young women of good family, with worldly prospects bright before them, into the reformed Carmelite houses that Saint Teresa had founded up and down Spain until her death in 1582.<sup>1</sup> Great and courageous souls like Saint Teresa herself and Saint John of the Cross, ascended so high above the conflict of faith and science that its divisions no longer reached them. And here be it said, that their mysticism was of a profundity and sophistication that a psychologist of Jung's stature may have standards to measure it, but not to invalidate it. If mental experience has a validity of its own, is entitled to be judged by its own standards, theirs was valid. But it rested on a foundation of rejection of the world. 'I die', Saint Teresa wrote, 'because I may not die'—for material life hung like an illusion between the soul and God. The earthly life she compared to a 'night in a bad inn'—and Saint John of the Cross, greater poet than she, was even more absolute in his rejection. With little more certainty of ever reaching another shore than the navigators who sailed across the Atlantic, they set out into 'the dark night of the soul' on a voyage of interior discovery no less courageous and hazardous, and, in terms of human experience, no less richly repaid, than the contemporary explorers of the material world. Modern psychologists are content to analyse those visions of the mind without exploring them. These Saints, not content to observe, lived their discoveries of the heights and depths of interior experience.

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In England, things went the other way. It was the world of the spirit, the 'interior castle' that was left to decay, while the discoveries of scientific materialism were pursued—to no less good purpose, let it be admitted, than were the spiritual by the

<sup>1</sup>To another century the irrational and often self-destructive desire to be a 'creative artist', so common at present among young people of both sexes, and so far from normal, will probably seem just as incomprehensible as the sixteenth-century urge towards the life of contemplative mysticism.

Spanish religious minds. But the strain characteristic of all Baroque art was felt on both sides. In Spain, Gongora and Gratian; in England John Donne and his school, bear the mark of the same attempt to hold together, in poetry, the two worlds; faith and material science; the finite and the infinite. For in England, the spiritual was not quite forgotten; nor was the Spain of the counter-reformation able altogether to disregard the implications of the new material sciences. For there was no longer one kind of truth in the world, but two, and those two, so then it seemed, in conflict.

What was great in the Baroque poets was that they did not underrate either kind of truth. They tried to hold the two hemispheres (the very word is characteristic of Baroque poetry) together, and if even partially they succeeded, their achievement was a tremendous one. Then, as now, the price of seeing too clearly both systems of value, was conflict and unhappiness. But then, as now, neither the revolutionary nor the reactionary, both of whom see things more simply, was wholly civilized.

The greatness of Baroque art, therefore, may be seen to be not in its destructive element, but in its attempt to reconcile those kinds of knowledge that at certain times seem impossible to reconcile, except in art.

Professor Edouardo Sarmiento, writing of Spanish Baroque art,<sup>1</sup> points out how, the counter-reformation notwithstanding, even in Catholic Spain, this sense of strain reveals a latent doubt, disbelief, and loss of faith. 'If we may believe', he writes, 'the involuntary evidence of the art-style of an age for the state of its soul, then we cannot doubt that some such diagnosis of the Spanish counter-reform is true. The Baroque bears the stigmata of disbelief, anxiety, and decadence, as certainly as the Gothic bears the marks of faith, joy, and vigour.'

The strain characteristic of Baroque art is typically expressed in the use of perspective. In Baroque painting, the human figure is by this means seen to stand not firmly anchored to the earth, but is represented in often tormented and sensational attitudes rising towards heaven, or some other infinite point introduced into the composition by this exaggeration of perspective. In architecture, the typical façade is 'built with the sky', to quote Professor Sarmiento again.

<sup>1</sup> Bulletin of Spanish Studies. July 1934.



The extreme instance of an attempt to focus the finite on the infinite, is to be found in the *transparente*—a kind of altar-piece found in some Spanish Baroque churches. Of this, Professor Sarmiento writes, 'When the central niche of the façade—a constructed altar grouping, is the throne for exposing the Sacred Host, the attempt to enclose the vista reaches its culmination. The serried mass of sculpture surges not merely round an outlet upon the heavens, but the Creator and Sustainer of the Heavens Himself, unmeasured depth contained physically within a white transparent circle of bread. Baroque paradox could go no further.'

But, he writes, 'Aesthetic order in a work of Art, which contains its own centre of reference, is the negation of the Classical, whose centre is one with the centre of life itself—whether it is taken to be the earth, or the sun, or the other stars. And, even though unconsciously, its human orthodoxy is in danger—nay, has failed already.'

\*            \*            \*

This may seem to be a digression from the subject—the metaphysical poetry of John Donne. But it is not so. For in poetry, a comparable attempt to bring together into focus the finite and the infinite, is the typical metaphysical figure, common to English and Spanish baroque poets, the conceit. Like the Baroque façade, this is not, as it might appear, a merely decorative device, but an attempt, in poetry, to harness together the tremendous forces of the temporal and the eternal, felt, as they were at that time, to be pulling apart. Here is a piece of John Donne from the poem *Goodfriday 1613—Riding Westward*, in which the space—the literal physical poles of the earth—are straining against the Christian image.

'Let mans Soule be a Spheare, and then, in this,  
The intelligence that moves, devotion is,  
And as the other Spheares, by being growne  
Subject to forraigne motions, lose their owne,  
And being by others hurried every day,  
Scarce in a yeare their naturall forme obey:  
Pleasure or businesse, so, our Soules admit  
For their first mover, and are whirld by it.  
Hence is't, that I am carryed towards the West  
This day, when my Soules forme bends towards the East.

There I should see a Sunne, by rising set,  
 And by that setting endlesse day beget;  
 But that Christ on this Crosse, did rise and fall,  
 Sinne had eternally benighted all.'

In this poem, Donne achieves something, in poetic terms very like the *Transparente* of Spanish Baroque architecture. The static image of Christ, the earth's fixed centre, is harnessed to the whirling image of the Copernican movement of the revolving earth, the moving spheres.

'Could I behold those hands which span the Poles,  
 And tune all speares at once, peirc'd with those holes?  
 Could I behold that endless height which is  
 Zenith to us, and our Antipodes,  
 Humbled below us? or that blood which is  
 The seat of all our Soules, if not of his,  
 Made durt of dust, or that flesh which was worne  
 By God, for his apparell, rag'd, and torne?'

The tension is immense. But the poem holds as it intends to hold, the two orders of reality together, not scientifically, or theologically, but as poetry—the only force perhaps that can harness together truths of different orders.

That is an extreme example of the constant characteristic of the conceit, which is to bring together, using as a focal point some slight similarity between them, sharply contrasting images, belonging, often, to different orders of reality (as in the passage just quoted). Other figures are commonly used to accomplish the same end. Of metaphysical poems it is less the figures used than the purpose they serve that is characteristic.

In this other quoted passage from *The Relique*, it is not science and the image of Christ that pull apart and are held by the conceit, but that other basic conflict that tormented the Baroque period, the paradox of life and death, sex and corruption.

'When my grave is broke up againe  
 Some second ghest to entertaine,  
 (For graves have learn'd that woman-head  
 To be to more than one a Bed)  
 And he that digs it, spies  
 A bracelet of bright haire about the bone,



Will he not let'us alone,  
 And thinks that there a loving couple lies,  
 Who thought that this device might be some way  
 To make their soules, at the last busie day,  
 Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?'

There are other subsidiary antitheses; there is the juxtaposition of the old half-legendary medievalism, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Noah and the flood and the rest—with the new Copernican pattern of the world, as here:

'That unripe side of earth, that heavy clime  
 That gives us man up now like Adam's time  
 Before he ate; mans shape that would yet be  
 Knew they not it, and feard beasts company  
 So naked at this day, as though man there  
 From Paradise so great a distance were  
 As yet the news could not arrived be  
 Of Adam's tasting the forbidden tree.'

Or again, the microcosm and the macrocosm are harnessed together in an image that recurs often in Donne, of life as land, death as sea:

'Man is the world, and death the ocean  
 To which God gives the lower parts of men.  
 This sea invirons all land though as yet  
 God hath set marks and bounds twixt us and it,  
 Yet doth it rore and gnaw, and still pretend,  
 And breaks our banks whenever it takes a friend,  
 Then our land waters (tears of passion) vent,  
 Our waters, then above the firmament  
 (Tears which our Soul doth for her sins let fall)  
 Take all a brakish taste, and funerall.'

'My America, my newfound land,' Donne called his mistress. One meets everywhere images of latitude and longitude, lengthening and shortening shadows: the new Copernican framework of the universe. Superimposed on the human measure of the Christian myth with eternity and infinity, God-in-man, at the centre, is a new order in which eternity and infinity are being banished to the circumference of an expanding universe, no longer infinitely present, but infinitely remote.

John Donne was so placed in history, and so shaped by his personal experience, as to feel the pull of all those great forces that were rending the world apart at the end of the sixteenth century. His parents were Catholics; he had not only two Jesuit uncles (bringing him closely under the Spanish influence) but a martyr in the family three generations back—none less than Sir Thomas More, beheaded for his allegiance to the Catholic faith in 1536. Through his stepfather, a distinguished London physician, John Symmings, twice president of the Royal College of Physicians, Donne made an early acquaintance with the paraphernalia of early natural science—and the terminology of human anatomy and physiology, bones, the functioning of the heart, lungs and nerves, forms yet another order of which Donne's poetry takes account.

His early tutors were Jesuits. From them he learned medieval philosophy, and the rules of the game of dialectics, that he played, cynically enough, in later life, when he was literary—or theological—ghost to the Rev. Thomas Moreton, in controversies against his old friends the Jesuits in the terms he had learned from them. Like a later product of Jesuit education, James Joyce, Donne learned the game, but not a respect for the players. A glance at *Ignatius his Conclave*, proves both these points. In many other ways, too, Donne resembles Joyce. Both retained the Catholic foundations and scaffolding, on which both built monuments of scepticism. Both enjoyed playing with ideas and words like jugglers—more super-subtle than their Jesuit schoolmasters themselves. Both would have owed more to their teachers had they been loved a little more and taught a little less.

At fourteen, John Donne and his younger brother Henry went up to Oxford. Three years later, they went on to Trinity College, Cambridge, where, one imagines, the more speculative and modern atmosphere that there surrounded him, did something to untie the knots of Donne's early, and evidently unhappy, boyhood, and develop in him that spell-binding charm that by all accounts was his all his life. 'A kind of elegant, irresistible art,' Ben Jonson called it; and Izaak Walton describes his company as 'one of the delights of mankind'. Even now, in his rapid idiom, as close to the ordinary speech of his day as W. H. Auden's is to our own, one can almost catch the sound of his voice, even in the first poems:

'I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I  
 Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?  
 But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly?  
 Or snorted we in the seven sleepers den?  
 T'was so—;

Want of beauty is a charge that has often been made against Donne's poetry; and in a certain sense with justice. For the worlds of beauty and of reality, too, were pulling apart at the turn of the century. Shakespeare wrote in a language at once near the real speech of men, and equally capable of speaking for that inner voice of the soul (heard all too often in the nineteenth century), for the two were not very different in an age when soldiers like Sydney and Essex, and seamen like Sir Walter Raleigh found it natural to be poets. But at the turn of the century, Shakespeare himself wrote:

'Truth may see, but cannot be,  
 Beauty brag, but 'tis not she,  
 Truth and beauty buried be.'

Donne spoke a language stripped of magic, bare, in that sense, of beauty. Milton inherited the beauty, but no longer wrote poetry in a language that men spoke. One might see in this division, too, another symptom of the repression of the soul.



Two other experiences belonging to John Donne's youth gave colour to his picture of the world. The first was the death of his brother, Henry Donne who, at the age of twenty or twenty-one, died for his faith. Henry Donne, at a time when John was going to plays, making love to those sophisticated and painted women whom he so much liked, remained a fervent Catholic. He did what so many Catholics then were doing—sheltered a priest in his rooms at Lincoln's Inn. For this he was thrown into the Clink prison at Newgate, where he died of gaol fever.<sup>1</sup>

What Donne thought about this we do not know. Did he feel himself challenged to follow the family tradition of martyrdom that had claimed his grandfathers, his two uncles, and now his own brother? Was his anger directed mainly against those laws that made English Catholics outlaws in their own country?

<sup>1</sup>For this and other facts of Donne's life I am indebted to Miss Evelyn Hardy's book, *Donne*.



Or against that underground, narrow, jesuitical Catholic-minority background that had forced martyrdom on his brother? Was the Catholic religion worth such a price? Evidently he decided that it was not, for Donne never turned back to that early faith. Rather he threw himself into a life of pleasure and study, in the gay world of Elizabeth's London. But that Catholic shadow was always between him and Gloriana's worldly sun.

One other experience, and Donne at twenty-seven must have felt himself able to say 'nihil humanum a me alienum puto'. In 1596, Donne joined Essex' expedition to raid Cadiz—the fashionable Spanish war of that year. There he saw war and yet another kind of death, in a burning Spanish ship—hideously modern.

'Out of a fired ship, which, by no way  
But drowning, could be rescued from the flame,  
Some men leap's forth, and ever as they came  
Neere the foes ships, did by their shot decay;  
So all were lost, which in the ship were found,  
They in the sea being burnt, they in the burn't ship drown'd.'

The following year he sailed, again under Essex, to the Azores. *The Storm* and *The Calm* show the poet knowing now the two horrors of life at sea—danger of death by shipwreck, and the stench and sickness of a ship becalmed in the tropics.

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At the age of twenty-seven, Donne turned his mind to settling down. He became secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Seal, father of two young men who had sailed with Donne under Essex. He was now an inmate of one of the greatest houses in London—York House, and a valued 'ornament' of that household. This must have seemed like the road to success. In this house Donne was near indeed to all the greatness of the court. But it was not Elizabeth's rising sun, but her decline that John Donne, the young secretary, saw in those four years at York House. His old leader the Earl of Essex, too, came to live under Sir Thomas Egerton's roof—but as a prisoner, under the Queen's displeasure. Here the Queen herself came as a visitor—but soon it was an old, broken woman who came to visit the young Earl, himself confined to his bed with sickness and sorrow. In 1600, Essex was beheaded. Whether or not John Donne saw with his own eyes that terrible execution,

at which two or three blows were struck before the neck was severed, it must have stamped on his mind yet another of those images of death that seemed to lurk for him at the end of every avenue by which he sought to reach the secure sunshine of the world.

‘ . . . sometimes in a beheaded man,  
 Though at those two Red seas, which freely ranne,  
 One from the Trunke, another from the Head,  
 His soule be sail’d, to her eternall bed,  
 His eyes will twinckle, and his tongue will roll,  
 As though he beckned, and cal’d backe his soule.’

At the turn of the century, it was not only Shakespeare who knew that

‘Death is now the Phoenix’ nest  
 And the turtle’s royal breast  
 To eternity doth rest.’

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So, at the end of Elizabeth’s reign, Donne had all the pieces in his hands. Scholasticism, science, adventure, war, both universities; London seen as a young man about town; and as a member of a household close to the court; vice he knew, and martyrdom. To call the fine suspense in which his mind hung in such a world cynicism would be to fail to understand the very essence of the civilized man’s predicament. To be a cynic is to undervalue. Donne’s strength was that he undervalued nothing. Each poem that he wrote is like a finely poised needle, suspended between the great magnets of science and religion, action and learning, the pleasures of love, the call to martyrdom; the infirm glory of the greatest court on earth; and the annihilation of all in death. The needle, for Donne, comes to rest only when it points to the one true North—that of love. And for Donne, as for Dante, it was through woman’s love that his way lay towards the divine love that was his final point of rest.

In two of his longer works, we can see Donne’s speculative mind at work in a way essentially modern, on changes of the medieval pattern of thought. *The Progresse of the Soule*, written in 1601, and one of Donne’s finest poems, combines the Garden of Eden myth with a fine intuitive forecasting of modern biological theory. The transmigration of a ‘soul’, beginning its life in an apple on the tree of Eden, and ending just as it reached

the human level (rather in mid-air, as Donne did not finish the poem as he had originally planned it) are traced from plant to bird, to fish, whale, elephant, dog, ape, and finally to man. Donne having no theory of science to prove cannot be blamed if the order is a little out at one or two places. But that the 'progresse' in the poem is so close to the picture that Darwin later established, is a measure of the natural scientific bent of Donne's mind. And all this is combined in a series of Durer-like pictures of plant and animal life, suggesting the herbals and bestiaries of the middle ages, in which walks Eve herself, as true to life as detail can make her; her mythical figure pulls up a real mandrake plant to give, as medicine, to a real baby. Like Durer, Donne makes the myth credible by the realism of the detail.

Nine years later, in 1610, Donne wrote *Ignatius his Conclave*. This satire is amusing reading even now; Donne describes his 'vision', in which 'I had liberty to wander through all places, and to survey and reckon all the roomes, and all the volumes of the heavens, and to comprehend the situation, the dimensions, the nature, the people, and the policy, both of the swimming Islands, the *Planets* and of all those which are fixed in the firmament. Of which, I thinke it an honester part as yet to be silent, than to do *Galileo* wrong by speaking of it, who of late hath summoned the other worlds, the Stars to come nearer to him, and give him an account of themselves. Or to *Keppler*, who as himselfe testifies of himselfe, ever since Tycho Braches death hath received it into his care, that no new thing should be done in heaven without his knowledge.' 'In the twinkling of an eye', writes Donne, 'I saw all the roomes in Hell open to my sight. And by the benefit of certaine spectacles, I know not of what making, but, I thinke, of the same, by which *Gregory*, the great, and *Beda* did discern so distinctly the soules of their friends, when they were discharged from their bodies, and sometimes the soules of such men as they knew not by sight, and of some that never were in the world, and yet they could distinguish them flying into Heaven, or conversing with living men, I saw all the channels in the bowels of the Earth; and all the inhabitants of all nations, and of all ages were suddenly made familiar to me. I think truely, *Robert Aquinas* when he tooke *Christs* long Oration, as he hung upon the Crosse, did use some such instrument as this, but applied to the eare; And so I thinke did he,



which dedicated to *Adrian 6*, the Sermon which *Christ* made in prayse of his father *Joseph*; for else how did they heare that, which none but they ever heard?' To proceed, Donne describes how (in Hell that is) 'I saw a secret place, where there were not many, beside Lucifer himselfe; to which, onely they had title, which had so attempted any innovation in this life, that they gave an affront to all antiquitie, and induced doubts, and anxieties, and scruples, and after, a libertie of beleeving what they would; at length established opinions, directly contrary to all established before.'

Here we recognize, in comic dress, the same Baroque conflict of ideas, of new and uncontrollable ideas that are far-reaching enough quite to overturn the foundations of the world. There is very little comic Baroque art, but *Ignatius his Conclave* may be claimed as a rare example of this category.

In this imaginary 'hell' the Jesuits take a high place as the arch equivocators. Here Donne 'saw' St. Ignatius (like Jouvett, in monk's habit) standing very close to Lucifer himself, advising him on the cases of those pretenders who sought admission to Hell's most exalted rank, as distorters of the universe.

The pretenders and their claims are interesting. Copernicus puts his case: 'Shall these gates be open to such as have innovated in small matters? and shall they be shut against me, who have turned the whole frame of the world, and am thereby almost a new "Creator"?'. Ignatius opposes his claim. 'Who cares', Ignatius asks, 'whether the earth travell, or stand still? Hath your raising up of the earth into heaven, brought men to that confidence, that they build new towers or threaten God againe? Or do they out of this motion of the earth conclude, that there is no hell, or deny the punishment of sin? Do not men beleev: do they not live just, as they did before?' Also 'those opinions of yours may very well be true'—and that in itself must exclude Copernicus from the highest honours of Hell. In the light of subsequent history, one is inclined to think that Donne's Ignatius was premature in his conclusion that men went on living 'just as they did before' after Copernicus.

Paracelsus was excluded likewise, because such as his discoveries were, they were of minor importance. Machiavelli had a better case: 'although the entrance into this place may be decreed to none but the Innovators, and onely such of them as

have dealt in *Christian* businesse; and of them also, to those only which have had the fortune to doe much harme, I cannot see but that next to the Jesuites, I must bee invited to enter, since I did not onely teach those wayes, by which, through *perfidiousness* and *dissembling of Religion*, a man might possesse, and usurpe upon the liberty of free *Commonwealths*; but also did arme and furnish the people with my instructions, how when they were under this oppression, they might safeliest conspire, and remove a *tyrant* or revenge themselves of their *Prince*, and redeeme their former losses; so that from both sides, both from *Prince* and *People*, I brought an abundant harvest, and a noble increase to this kingdome. By this time I perceived *Lucifer* to bee much moved with this Oration, and to incline much towards *Machiavel*. For he did acknowledge him to bee a kind of *Patriarke*, of those whom they call *Laymen*. And he had long observed, that the *Clergie* of *Rome* tumbled downe to *Hell* daily, easily, voluntarily, and by troupes, because they were accustomed to sinne against their conscience, and knowledge; but that the *Layitie* sinning out of a slouthfulnesse, and negligence of finding the truth, did rather offend by ignorance, and omission. And therefore he thought himselfe bound to reward *Machiavel*, which had awakened this drowsie and implicate *Layitie* to greater, and more bloody undertakings.'

'Vision' or not, what Donne wrote had this much truth in it. These were ideas whose conflict was on an earthly plan 'inducing doubts, and anxieties, and scruples, and after, a liberty of believing what they would'.

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Between the Horatian vein of Donne's early love poems, and *The Ecstasie*, written in the early days of his love for his wife (then still Anne More, niece of Sir Thomas Egerton, queening it, at seventeen, as hostess for her widowed uncle at York House) is a difference not of degree but of kind. No poet has ever written more convincingly against fidelity in love:

'Will no other vice content you?  
Will it not serve to do as did your mother?  
Or doth a fear that men are true torment you?  
Oh, we are not—be not you so

Let me, and do you, twenty know—  
 Rob me, but bind me not, and let me go—  
 Must I who came to travail through you  
 Grow your fixt subject, because you are true?’

Now he was to find that love is a stronger power than pleasure,

‘As our blood labours to beget  
 Spirits, as like souls as it can,  
 Because such fingers need to knit  
 The subtile knot that makes us men’.

And after a year of that marital love, he could write, and truthfully,

‘All other things to their destruction draw,  
 Only our love hath no decay,  
 This no tomorrow hath, nor yesterday,  
 Running, it never runs from us away,  
 But truly keepes his first, last, everlasting day’.

This was the marriage that has been written off by nearly all his biographers as the most unfortunate thing Donne ever did, and so it was. But, as is so often the case with our worst mistakes, it was also the best thing he had done so far. It was both these. And while it ruined his career for many years to come—for the scandal of Donne’s runaway match with Anne More lost him his position in the York House, and effectively barred to him any other preferment—it is no less certain that, with his marriage, Donne’s writings take on a mature nobility, a depth of understanding, from this time, that was to mature with the years. A love begun so unwisely in a setting so romantic, survived years of shared poverty, hardship, loneliness, and social banishment; a growing family, the sickness and loss of children. It was, in fact, a real marriage, from which Donne was to learn not only the joyful, but also the sorrowful mysteries of love.

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During the fifteen years following his marriage, the current of love flowed underground, worked in secret. Outwardly, we see Donne frustrated, with no outlet for his great mental energies, no scope for his remarkable abilities, living poorly in the country, which he always hated; then in a small unheathly house



at Mitcham; then under the roof of a patron, Sir Robert Drury. For a time he acted as literary ghost to his friend the Rev. Thomas Moreton, afterwards Bishop of Durham. Donne, with his tongue in his cheek, must have enjoyed writing long controversial pieces against his old friends the Jesuits, employing against them the arguments they had taught him to use. The simpler mind of Thomas Moreton probably did not grasp the fact that Donne believed no more in his own arguments than in theirs; and it was he who first suggested to Donne that he should take Anglican orders—a suggestion that he made with admirable kindness and tact. But Donne refused on that occasion, giving as his reason, his own unworthiness for that profession.

Now when a man refuses the hand of an eligible young woman of good connections on the grounds of his own unworthiness, it may be, and very likely is, true that he is unworthy. But it is quite certain that he is not in love. Unworthiness is an unimpeachable excuse for getting out of the marriage without offending the family. Donne may have been unworthy to take holy orders. He was certainly not in love with the Anglican Church.

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Donne's middle period—the years of poverty and worry that drove him to the necessity of a servility to possible patrons that became him very ill; in a series of always frustrated attempts to get back into a career of some sort—produced no poems as fine in their kind as the early *Songs and Sonnets*, or later *Holy Sonnets* and religious verse. But those he wrote at that time are revealing, bringing to light as they do the measure of the spiritual maladjustment of Donne to his world, and that world to itself; and the growing seriousness with which the poet now sought to find a solution for a problem whose implications he increasingly realized. The clue is to be found in *The Anatomie of the World*, and the *First and Second Anniversaries*. These ambitious poems, full of fine passages, have something deeply wrong about them, and are embarrassing reading even now. This is not so much because they were written to some extent (possibly, or partly) with an eye to getting a patron (which they did), but because they open a religious void that it is saddening to contemplate.

These Rilke-like poems were written, like the *Duino Elegies*, on the occasion of the untimely death of a young girl—a girl

whom the poet had never seen—Miss Elizabeth Drury, only daughter of that Sir Robert Drury who was to be Donne's patron for a number of years. And if ever poems rang false, these do. 'If it had been written of the Virgin Mary it had been something,' Ben Jonson said of the *Anatomie of the World*—and he has put his finger on the very point of the weakness. They were not written of the Virgin Mary. They were, however (as Donne said), written 'of the idea of a woman, not as she was'. They were, in fact, a lamentable, trumped-up attempt to put a personal image and personal 'idea of a woman' in the place of the old and universal Christian pantheon—even of the Mother of God herself—who were gone from the empty niches of the reformed churches of England. This pompous, inflated, home-made improvisation tagged on to the corpse of Miss Elizabeth Drury reveals just how far adulation falls short of canonization. The root of medieval faith had been severed. Not one of the elegies that Donne wrote in succeeding years, attributing to the nobility and to princes virtues that they may have possessed, or may not, ever could bridge that gulf between the scepticism of the reform and the lost medieval faith. They remain mere epitaphs: these poems, and all Donne's poetry of the grave and the dead, is like a dark after-image of the light of faith and bears to the medieval faith the skull-like resemblance that the negative photograph bears to the positive.

Donne did indeed, like an apostle not of faith but of mortality, put something in those empty niches, in those churches deserted by their saints. But not the carved angels, not the shrines of gothic saints. He hung those empty walls with emblems of mortality, urns, marmoreals, symbols of death and physical corruption; the pomp of the grave, not the symbols of life. These silent testimonies of doubt have, in the English churches, replaced the saints in their shrines. Donne was, of that tradition, one of the originators, who left imprinted on the English Church its characteristic grand, but essential, though reluctant, scepticism. The real root of the reformation is for ever silently testified by these. The monument of Donne himself, in his marble winding-sheet, as it remains in St. Paul's to this day, contrasts sombrely with the enshrined saints of the ages and places where death is not accompanied by the shudder of the grave, but by hope of heaven and fear of hell.

And yet there is greatness in the scepticism of the reform—for it is a relative, not an absolute scepticism that we find in the English Baroque; a scepticism that would fain believe, not one that belittles, with the diabolical 'spirit that denies'. One that does still, in fact, hold to the desirability of faith, and therewith, some faith also. Like the Five Cups in the Tarot Pack, three are empty but two remain. The Anglicanism of Donne's day reflects, like the moon, the last light from the setting sun of medieval Christianity. But the victory over 'superstitious practices' had been, by 1600, all too complete. The moon, too, was losing its reflected light, as that sun set on England.

A new tradition was to grow in the English Church. But the English Bible, its greatest ornament, was, in the reign of James I, still in translation. The magnificent words of the English Prayer Book were still unhallowed by time. And the emblems of mortality had not gathered dust. The grave yawned wide, and the stench and the worms of it became all man's future, since what lay beyond it was less certain than it had been. In the Middle Ages, men had feared hell. Donne must have wished that the certain fear of hell would remove for him the greater horror of doubt, for if there is no hell, all must perish in the grave, in mortality, in annihilation.

Donne was still man enough of the Renaissance to feel that the death of one human being could matter. His pride and dignity were undulled by modern statistics into the accidia of a sense of anonymity, and the belief, that after all, it does not greatly matter that we die. Death mattered to Donne as much as heaven mattered to the saints. He gave to death, the adversary, his own stature, the greatness of a man of a court of the Renaissance.

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If John Donne was resolved not to take Anglican orders, there was one person, and that a great one, resolved that he should—King James himself. The King who gave so many treasures to that Church—the final version of the Prayer Book, the English Bible—gave it also the Dean of St. Paul's. For a long time the King had had an eye on Donne, and finally giving a point blank refusal to all Donne's attempts to obtain preferment in other fields—as an ambassador, or in any other secular appointment, the King said in so many words, that he would give him advancement in the Church, but in no other profession. The old



King, eccentric, lacking in charm and grandeur as he was, did well by the Church of England, and not least, when he gave it John Donne, who finally, in 1614, consented to be ordained.

It is true that this was not the career that Donne would have chosen. It is true that the Anglican Church would never be, for Donne, what the Catholic faith has ceased to be. Anglicanism was not an alternative faith, but a relative, though not absolute, scepticism; Donne himself was a relative—but not absolute—sceptic. But to imagine that Donne cynically entered the Church only because he could no longer endure to live without a position in the world and a source of income to support his family would be as wrong as to see Donne as a fervent Anglo-Catholic. Donne was far too spiritual a man to live without a religion. He was far too intelligent a man to be impressed either way by doctrinal controversy (had he not written it himself?). But God he conceived as far above such human conflicts, undignified, embittered and cruel as they were. In one of his early satires—on religious controversy—he had written, before 1597, on the quarrels that occupied the kings of England and of Spain, the Pope, Luther, and the rest,

‘Foole and wretch, wilt thou let they Soule be tyed  
To mans lawes, by which she shall not be tryed  
At the last day? Oh, will it then boot thee  
To say a Philip, or a Gregory,  
A Harry or a Martin taught thee this?  
Is not this excuse for mere contraries,  
Equally strong cannot both sides say so?  
That thou mayest rightly obey power, her bounds know;’

—concluding—a conclusion that he maintained for the rest of his life—

‘So perish Soules, which more chuse mens unjust  
Power from God claym’d, than God himselfe to trust.’

The tide in England just then was carrying the more generous, living, vital things, in the direction of the reform. Donne was charitable, moderate and tolerant, and would rather compromise than prolong a bitter division. He could not fail to have been impressed by his good friends Bishop Moreton, Magdalen Herbert, the mother of George Herbert, the poet, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury; the Countess of Bedford, whose house at

Twickenham had for Donne been like a garden of sweetness in his desert; and many others; all must have drawn Donne imperceptibly into a circle of friendship and understanding that, as the years passed, made the Church of England seem less alien to the son of an old Catholic family. So at last it came about that Donne had a secure place in the world. Soon he was to be that Dean of St. Paul's, whom we remember as a kind of Anglican saint of mortality, an ornament of that cold, but not ignoble Baroque religion that has so well suited the English character, too speculative for absolute faith, but too idealistic for absolute scepticism. And as he lay dying, twenty years later, Donne could say truthfully, that he believed that the hand of God had been in the shaping of his life. It would be an impertinence to doubt that it was so.

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Two years after Donne's ordination, and four before his appointment as Dean of St. Paul's, Anne Donne died in giving birth to their twelfth child. If one sees the events of a life as stages of a pilgrimage, it is difficult not to see in Anne Donne's death as the departure of one of those legendary guides—like Dante's Virgil, or Beatrice, who stayed with the poet only until her work was accomplished, for now Donne had entered the last stage of his strange development. Henceforth his inner life was to be lived in relation only to God.

Look at the beginning of Donne's life—those love-poems, so subtly introspective, yet so worldly, so far from serious; at the portrait of Jack Donne at eighteen, the young man with the earrings, at the end of his three years at Cambridge; and look at the end—the eloquent divine, who, in the words of one critic, now 'put a trumpet to his lips'; who himself chose that posterity should remember him in the aspect of his death, the features burned out, the winding sheet tied about his face. How did the one change into the other? It happened imperceptibly, naturally. It is the same man. That unmistakable personal idiom, the rapid ardent sentences, the very imagery of the early love poems are found in the *Holy Sonnets*. The very imagery of erotic love is retained, and amplified into a symbolic language to speak of God, and to God.

'Take mee to you, imprison me, for I  
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,  
Norever chast, except you ravish mee.'

The first and the last poems that he wrote, use almost precisely the same images.

Donne indeed put a trumpet to his lips in those later years, when he preached at Paul's Cross, to the people, and before two kings—James I, and later King Charles—at Whitehall; when he summoned up the angels in Baroque imagery of unsurpassed grandeur—

'At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow  
Your trumpets, Angells, and arise, arise  
From death, you numberlesse infinities  
Of soules, and to your scattred bodies goe,  
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,  
All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,  
Despaire, law, chance, hath slaine, and you whose eyes,  
Shall behold God, and never tast deaths woe.'

But a trumpet does not necessarily mean a release from doubts. With Donne, the light and shade was deeper, that was all, as his life declined from evening into night. In his youth, that we cannot know all seemed reason to doubt God; in his maturity, a reason for trusting Him. But as the noon of love darkened into the shadow of death, the witty scepticism of youth darkened into the agonizing doubts of age. It is still a poetry of doubt, of decline from faith, struggling to find certainty at the brink of the grave, that no other times of life, neither the love nor the learning of his prime, had yielded the poet. For all Donne's doubts gradually focused on one point—Death. As in loving women he was introspective, analysing his love, so in his sickness he analysed himself as thoroughly as Freud could ever have searched the submerged regions of instinct and the unconscious. If only he could have found the soul, and brought it out like an undiscovered organ! But deep as he might search, it was not to be found. The *Devotions on Sundrie Occasions* are in their way as searchingly introspective as the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. But they are the voice of the body, the unconscious, the dark chaos of man, not his incandescence, as is St. John's great introspective analysis.

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To pass over the twenty years of his preaching and ministry, we reach the story of Donne's death. In the winter of 1630, Donne



was a dying man. He was too ill to preach at Christmas, but at the beginning of Lent, knowing that it was for the last time, he rose from his bed to preach perhaps his greatest sermon of all—'Death's Duell, or A Consolation to the Soul against the Dying Life, and Living Death of the Body'. This sermon was 'Delivered at Whitehall, before the King's Majesty' on 25 February, 1630, 'Being his last Sermon and called by His Majesties' Household, the Doctor's owne Funerall Sermon'. He took as his text the terrible sentence 'And unto God the Lord, belong the issues of death'. Here at its most sublime is that 'metaphysical shudder', the horror of mortality. Here indeed is Freud's death instinct, Rilke's little skull born with every living child, Hamlet's skull:

'Wee have a winding sheete in our Mother's wombe, which growes with us from our conception, and wee come into the world, wound up in that winding sheet, for wee come to seeke a grave; And as prisoners discharg'd of actions may lie for fees, so when the wombe hath discharg'd us, yet we are bound to it by cordes of flesh by such a string, as that wee cannot goe thence, nor stay there; wee celebrated our owne funeralls with cries, even at our birth; as though our threescore and ten years life were spent in our mother's labour, and our circle made up in the first point thereof, we begge our Baptisme, with another Sacrament, with teares; And we come into a world that lasts many ages, but wee last not.'

But in the very toils of this death, Donne was to portray, as it has never before or since been portrayed in England in poetry, or in any other art, the scene of the Crucifixion, in a baroque magnificence comparable only to the painting of El Greco:

'There now hangs that sacred Body upon the Crosse, rebaptized in his owne teares and sweat, and embalmed in his owne blood alive. There are those bowells of compassion, which are so conspicuous, so manifested, as that you may see them through his wounds. There those glorious eyes grew faint in their light: so as the Sun ashamed to survive them, departed with his light too. And then that Sonne of God, who was never from us, and yet had now come a new way unto us in assuming our nature, delivers that soule (which was never out of his Father's hand) by a new way, a voluntary emission of it into his Father's hands; For though to this God our Lord, belong'd these issues of death, so that considered in his owne contract, he must necessarily die, yet at no

breach or battery, which they had made upon his sacred Body, issued his soule, but emisit, hee gave up the Ghost, and as God breathed a soule into the first Adam, so this second Adam breathed his soule into God, into the hands of God. There wee leave you in that blessed dependancy, to hang upon him that hangs upon the Crosse, there bath in his teares, there suck at his woundes, and lie downe in peace in his grave, till hee vouchsafe you a resurrection, and an ascension into that Kingdome, which hee hath purchas'd for you, with the inestimable price of his incorruptible blood.'

Here indeed we have doubt at its most heroic, redeemed by its own intensity, and achieving the stature of faith. For greater than a complacent belief in something trivial, is the doubt of something great. For to doubt is in itself to assert and establish the values doubted. So Baroque art takes its stature from medieval faith. Never again, perhaps, will a decline of faith produce anything comparable, for never again will the world have so much to lose, as the medieval Christian faith. Compared with the struggle with which then were relinquished the values of a passing age, it is frightening to see, in our period, with what ease, what lack of spiritual struggle, values are discarded. For the gulf that opens for us (in *Mein Kampf*, the Communist Manifesto, and our own and the American materialist Utopias) is as much deeper than Donne's relative doubt as medieval Christianity was higher than the liberal humanism that succeeded it, and is now in its turn the vanishing faith.

The image of Christ crucified is, of all the Christian images, the one that in itself contains the full paradox of human doubt and human faith, the focal point of temporal and eternal, at which the eternal is at once most essentially challenged, and most essentially triumphant. For Donne, the pull was not only away from faith, but also, with equal, and perhaps finally with greater strength, towards it. At the end of his life only two magnets retained any power over him—the image of the grave and the image of God.

In the seven weeks that lay between the preaching of *Death's Duell* and death itself, Donne prepared for his promised end, still seeking God with a courage equal to that of any saint who ever battled his way out of this world. Yet it is as an emblem of mortality that Donne chose that we should remember him. Sir

Izaak Walton tells how he 'sent for a carver to make for him in wood the figure of an urn, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and to bring with it a board, of the just height of his body. These being got, then without delay a choice painter was got to be in readiness to draw his picture, which was taken as followeth: Several charcoal fires being first made in his large study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand, and having put on all his clothes, had this sheet put on him, and so tied with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed as dead bodies are usually fitted, to be shrouded or put into their coffin or grave. Upon this urn he thus stood, with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might show his lean, pale, and death-like face, which was purposely turned towards the east, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour Jesus. In this posture he was drawn at the just height; and when the picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bedside, where it continued and became his hourly object till his death, and was then given to his dearest friend and executor, Dr. Henry King, then chief Residentiary of St. Paul's, who caused him to be thus carved in one entire piece of white marble, as it now stands in that church.'

To these last weeks also belong two of the greatest of his lyrical poems—the *Hymne to God my God, in my sicknesse*, and *A Hymne to God the Father*.

In the first Donne, for a moment echoing the faith of Saint John of the Cross who wrote of the soul:

‘Oh night more lovely than the day  
Oh night that joined the beloved with her lover,  
\* and changed her into her love’,

writes like a mystic ‘Since I am coming to that Holy roome Where, with thy Quire of Saints for evermore *I shall be made thy Musique*’.

He takes his last backward look on the world. How long ago it was that he had written of his mistress’ body,

‘without sharp north, without declining west’.

How long ago those voyages with Essex, long dead, to Cadiz and the Azores! Now these images of life are seen down the lengthening perspective of death:



'Whilst my Physitians by their love are growne  
Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie  
Flat on his bed, that by them may be showne  
That this is my South-west discoverie  
Per fretum febris, by these streights to die,

I joy, that in these straits, I see my West;  
For, though their currants yeeld returne to none,  
What shall my West hurt me? As West and East  
In all flatt Maps (and I am one) are one,  
So death doth touch the Resurrection.'

And for the last time for centuries to come, the natural and the spiritual orders are brought together in a Baroque image of unsurpassed power; for one last time the poles of the natural world, of the human measure and of supernatural truth, were one:

'We thinke that Paradise and Calvarie,  
Christs Crosse, and Adams tree, stood in one place;  
Looke Lord, and finde both Adams met in me;  
As the first Adams sweat surrounds my face,  
May the last Adams blood my soule embrace'.

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But to his very death, doubt and faith struggled for the soul of John Donne. His last written words were these:

'I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne  
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore;  
Sweare by thy selfe, that at my death thy sonne  
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;  
And, having done that, Thou haste done,  
I feare no more'.

It has remained for a painter of our own tormented age, Stanley Spenser, to paint the scene that the monument he himself designed has for so long obscured, of 'John Donne arriving at the Gates of Heaven'. For though much had perished in doubt, enough faith finally remained to bring within their reach that heroic soul who welded together in his poetry the hemispheres of broken truth.

# NANCY CUNARD

## LETTER FROM PARIS

March 1945

*'Nous pensons que nous allons retrouver la liberté, quand retrouverons-nous l'égalité? Si seulement le pauvre pouvait manger, oui, manger . . .'* ('We think we shall find liberty again, but when equality? If only the poor could eat . . .')

THE letter with these symptomatic words from my village in Normandy came as I finished packing to return at last to France, after five years absence, six months after the liberation.

It was a strange journey to Paris from Dieppe, not a beast in the fields, hardly a man or woman on the roads, scarcely a village en route. As the half-empty train crept, hastened, then stopped frequently and lengthily during its seven-hour run along these byways of railways, one noted many a bomb-crater along the line. *Le recueillement*, the communing with self, seemed to lie over the whole of the unpeopled landscape, a legacy of the misery of occupation; nothing here but silence and waiting.

At the sufficient but very 'disciplined' meal they served us I talked to an eloquent French journalist whom I asked if *la misère* was very noticeable in Paris. 'No,' said he, 'it hides there, the opposite of in the South, where *la misère* is almost on parade'. At length, in the dark of night, illuminated at the station approaches by fine new powerful arc-lamps set high, we moved into Paris. With a surging tear I embraced the blue-bloused porter, a hefty man, who said with emotion that it had been *très dur* indeed the whole of these years. And so, Paris again, at last; Paris: twenty years of life, for twenty years my home.

I opened the window next morning on to a blaze of grey. Such the effect, from a high sixth floor, of all the roof-tones in the pure Paris sunlight that 26 February. One had forgotten these things. Forgotten, too, that one would hear facts from the very lips of people who had withstood and duped the Boches; how the 'Myth of the Marechal' never took in the great majority of the French, certainly not the working class, nor the *marchande de vins* on the corner (whose husband, killed in the last war, had fought at Verdun and 'never thought much of Pétain anyway'); that vivid accounts of Allied bombings of Paris, 'most terrifying

but approved by us', would throb to the ear; that the concierge (mine is Mme Stum, a tremendous *résistante* with a grand, *résistant* husband, both Bretons), might say, as she did say, that her son has just been killed as a *lieutenant des troupes de choc du Général Delattre*. . . .

I am glad that first day back in Paris is over. I know now what Lazarus felt after the tomb. It was terribly painful, and somehow I could not think this out, yet wanted to. Better far to have been flung back into some great street-day, a 1 May, a 14 juillet. I walked alone (and have never stopped walking since) down the whole of the Champs Elysées along the Grands Boulevards to the Bourse, glad to be alone, hoping I would meet no one I knew, hesitating on the threshold of what future. . . Later on, Georges Sadoul, co-founder and present editor of *Les Etoiles*, a literary review started clandestinely, said to me: 'Every one of us, Aragon included, felt like this on returning to Paris from exile or from the southern zone'.

During the course of that walk, that re-establishing of contact with France, visual intake mercifully predominated. Three things immediately startle: those hats on the women, their fanciful high wooden-soled wedge shoes, and the extraordinary 'man-taxis'—bicycle-drawn and motor-bicycle-drawn rickshaws, contraptions in plywood, wicker-work, metal, in anything that contains two people with the least weight of its own. Of the hats the Germans said to the French: 'What would they have been like if you had WON the war?' (and it is easy to see how these great, often beautiful turbans came about: it was indeed a 'high-hatting' of the Boches, a sign of undashed spirit). Of the rickshaws people say: 'Shocking. But at least strong men pull them and they make a great deal of money.'

The Grands Boulevards are full, shops glitter, newspapers (alas, in a reduced form of only one page) are being sold; most of the cafés stay open till 8 or 9 at night, some shut a day or two per week. Salty, golden water called beer, quite acceptable cognac, and *café national* cost you six, ten, twenty times as much as the authentic things did formerly.

To force myself out of the extraordinary feeling of strangeness with which the return from exile troubled me during those first hours, I went to *Ce Soir*, one of the biggest dailies, installed with some eight other of the ex-clandestine resistance papers in the



palatial offices of suppressed, pro-Vichy *Paris-Soir*. Within a few moments its scholarly, intellectual chief editor, Louis Parrot, was telling me of the immense number of new books, reviews, poems, plays and people that constitute the beginning of the 'after the war' efflorescence, already well on the way. Yes, they are in advance here on what you might think would be the 'normal' time-table. The war is not over, but activity in all things of the intellect and of the arts is already in its stride, because France is free of the Germans, because there is an *immense* desire and intention of renewing all the old links with the rest of the world as soon as may be, and because this is just characteristic of France's eternal, beautiful force of renewal.

Even to list new books and reviews and talk a little about the writers and other intellectuals would need a separate article, so here are merely some notes, rather at random:

Paul Valéry's *Bergson* is soon coming out. Aragon's new novel, *Aurélien* is extremely successful; likewise a new poem of his '*La Diane Française*'; Jean Paulhan is at the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Sartre and Camus have been constantly mentioned to me as the two outstanding new writers; *Les Mouches* of the former, *Mal Entendu* of the latter, are cited as THE books to read for a knowledge of what occupation was like. Vercor's *Marche à l'Etoile* (on the persecution of the Jews) ranks high. Marcel Arland's *Antarès*, with illustrations by Marie Laurencin, is announced. A very interesting work will be the book on Resistance-writers and poets by Louis Parrot. These, thanks mainly to Aragon's animating and organizing spirit, were grouped into the *Comité National des Ecrivains*—in both zones. *Les Lettres Françaises*, the big literary weekly, and *Les Etoiles*, were its mouthpieces; both started clandestinely in the occupied and unoccupied regions. George Adam, editor of *Les Lettres Françaises*, has written a superb book, *L'Epée dans les Reins* on the first of the Nazi years here; Claude Roy's *Les Yeux Ouverts dans Paris Insurgé* is brilliant reportage of the six great days that freed Paris.

*Carrefour* is another literary weekly. *Regards* has come out again. Praised as a vivid picture of occupation is a sort of diary by Jean Galtier-Boissière (who was editor of *Le Crapouillot*). There are indeed such literary riches, and the immediate present seems to overlap with such profusion on the immediate past,

that it is impossible in a fortnight, doing widely different things and so many of them, to appraise, evaluate, analyse 'trends'—least of all, predict. And there is still a sort of tendency to think of 'two zones'. Thus, Tzara, Jean Cassou, Moussinac and many others have made a capital of Toulouse. André Malraux and André Chamson are with the Armies. Eluard, whose productivity throughout, like that of Aragon under various pseudonyms, was immense, is in Paris. He has just written me: 'I never want to leave France again'. His public, which is pretty well everybody, adores him. Aragon and Eluard share about evenly, I should say, the gratitude of France, as poets, and as leaders.

A great and lengthy joy lies ahead for all those who love this country and want to read of the terrible years here, and of what comes after, as soon as the barriers are down and all the books, reviews, plays, music and other arts can come and go again freely.

On the left bank the literary cafés, the *Deux Magots* and the *Flore* are as full as ever. The latter, one hears, remained a perfect moral fortress against the Boches; the Germans hesitated to enter it. Today, it is a veritable centre of intellectual productivity; Sartre sits there writing lengthily when in Paris; there is almost a 'School of the Café de Flore'—that of the most active of the numerous resistance groups. It is certainly an oasis in the desert of daily difficulties that have to be coped with: food, transport, lack of time to do things.

For—not a bus, not a taxi, the Métro like a Cup-Final crowd most of the time, the appalling cost of *everything*—gas without strength, electricity without heat, *ersatz* prevalent, ration-cards even for salt. Eighteen different slips of paper per month for various articles of food, but often these articles, meat and cooking-fats particularly, are non-existent! Is anything on sale instead? NO, not until two weeks ago, when a tiny slice of American spam appeared instead of meat. Milk, chocolate and oranges are allowed only to children, and milk only to the youngest. The total lack of coffee (*mélange national* is made of acorns, chicory and something else, but without coffee in it) save on the Black Market at anything like 1,000 francs a lb., is a national disaster. Think of England without any tea whatever and you have the comparison, though lack of coffee is worse.

Yet the Parisian temper is good. It is patient, greatly troubled

and denunciatory of all this beastliness in daily living, appreciative of the first needs of war, appreciative of the British and the Americans (definitely the great majority of French people are). *This is so in all classes.* I know two or three people who have returned to London from here saying 'the French are furious, they think it's worse than under the Germans, and even preferred them'. These people are either deliberately lying or saw only Fascists and fifth columnists—who of course continue to exist, and many a complaint have I heard that the 'cleaning-up' process was not done quickly enough and is very far from thorough. The protagonists of 'the French are furious' certainly never talked to the man in the street, nor to anyone else representative.

Despite all these difficulties of transport, of daily living, and the hesitation with which one meets friends in the bar or café, where a few drinks can run to several hundred francs, Paris IS Paris. Hardly damaged at all by bombs, save in some of its suburbs (badly so there), in the centre it is elegant, busy, rhythmical, alive with new plays and old, films, picture-shows, spring fashion displays. Forty of the big dressmakers have started selling their new creations at from 15,000 francs up; hat prices in the same type of establishment begin at 3,000 francs. There is, one is told, no lack of clients 'eager to spend, as the value of money might go down'. Several hundred thousand Parisians live out of making fashions and other luxury trades, but . . .

A spate of first nights and gatherings is on these two weeks. The big stores—I walked quickly through the Galeries Lafayette, noting particularly the ravishing display of cosmetics and *articles de Paris*—have exquisite things, remarkably refreshing to eyes from England, and I predict a future of great beauty in all the stuff of adornment. But the appalling 'house that Jack built' of the increased living-rate and Black Market, the whole nightmare of prices, one dragging the other after it, dominates. It will, or most of it will, collapse as soon as FOOD is allowed to come, to be distributed and eaten, and coffee drunk, and wine, too, and tobacco smoked. Then life can be lived again at relatively ordinary cost and on a gradually returning-to-normal scale, and the *café*, the most democratic institution in the whole world, be restored to its old status of availability to all. And soon the 'worst winter ever climatically' will be over—and



then, I say to myself with some bitterness, 'everyone in Paris with a friend in the country can at least eat dandelion salad'. One of the theories about the Black Market is this: although there are plenty of things to sell, and quite apart from the very real lack of transport, these things remain hidden as their owners prefer to keep them until the monetary situation is clearly established. A French bank-clerk who knows England said to me: 'One needs at least £600 a year to live, just live, in Paris now'. The neighbouring wine-merchant puts the reason for the lack of food in Paris, and other abuses, into these words: 'Lack of transport and the fifth column. This corruption was all started by, and under, the Germans, of course.' There are numerous cases of food arriving from the country being stolen en route and sold to, then on, the Black Market.

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A brilliant *première*, with Paul Claudel and many other intellectual personalities in the audience, was that of the novelist René Laporte's first play, *Federigo*, produced by the creative *metteur-en-scène* Marcel Herrand, founder of 'Le Rideau de Paris' Theatre in 1929. His associate, Jean Marchat, and exquisite Maria Casarès (daughter of the Spanish Republican ex-Minister, Casarès y Quiroga) gave a beautiful and convincing performance of the gambler-philosopher-nobleman in fifteenth-century Italy and of Olivia, the woman who loved him for 100 years. Man and symbol, it is an old legend. The angel (admirably played by Gérard Philipe) granted Federigo three wishes, one of which resulted in his living for a century. The climax at the end comes with Federigo holding Olivia (who is also Death) in his arms while Gestapo-like papal soldiers burst in searching for him, 'the sorcerer'. Fine words throughout, those of a poet. Incidental music by Georges Auric. Setting and dresses (remarkably fine) by Herrand and Grès. Only adverse criticism: the action does not stand out enough; with judicious cutting it will. Herrand told me later how abominable it was working under the Germans, whose permission, of course, had to be obtained for everything. But, throughout, his theatrical production and film-work never ceased—and many patriots were hidden by him the while.

I went to another *première*, with Herrand, who impersonates the striking, coldly insolent murderer-poet, Lacenaire in the

three-hour *Enfants du Paradis* film set in the 1840's of Paris theatrical life. Jean-Louis Barrault as Debureau, the inspired clown, Arletty as the star-actress, and the rest, act it beautifully. It is produced by Marcel Carné and will be famous. The dialogue (remarkable lines stand out) is by the poet Jacques Prévert. But once again, CUT; drastically so, that the best sequences, and they are many, be uncluttered by the unimportant ones. As it is, the good sequences are as fine as the best in any great film.

Sartre's *Huis Clos* is already talked about in England. Good. You will like it very much. Its success here was such that thirty extra performances are being given after it had come to the end of its run. Finely acted by Votold, Chauffard, Tania Balachova, Gaby Sylvia, I asked myself while watching it: is Hell the beginning of Eternity or is Eternity Hell? For this stinging, long, one-acter with its three attractive (two women, one man) characters, plus 'Satan's nephew', the young, very quiet and sinister waiter, is Hell. The three inter-torturers locked into the *in camera* (meaning of the term *Huis Clos*) of a cheap, bare hotel-room, where sleep is unknown, but where eternity is talk and question only. Not necessarily does one think of Strindberg. The play has great character of its own. It is very much discussed here. England would eat up this sharp, sophisticated, clever dialogue, full of action, especially if it went over exactly as played here.

I cannot affirm that the trend of many recent plays has been symbolical, discursive, without action; yet I believe this is so—a legacy of occupation conditions perhaps. In any case, the much-talked-of *Tristan et Yseult*, by Lucien Fabre (Daniele Darrieux as Yseult), strikes one as strangely out of joint with the facts or symbolism of the realistic times in which we live. Described by one critic as 'twelve tons of cement on the stage, the play of the same weight', I could not sit it out.

Other plays people are talking of are *Agrippa*, a comedy by Barsacq, *Les Mal Aimés* by Mauriac at the Comédie Française, *Une Grand Fille toute simple* by Roussin. Mistinguet is appearing in Montparnasse; the Sadler's Wells Ballets draw large appreciative crowds; the several concerts given by Benjamin Britten are very much applauded, and there are numerous British and American films showing. It is said that Picasso may do the setting for Lorca's *Yerma*, which 'Le Rideau de Paris' would

produce. The big film *François Villon*, scenario by Mac Orlan, directed by Swoboda, is half finished. The elaborate and tasteful reconstruction of a whole quarter of fifteenth-century Paris which I saw on the Buttes Chaumont, is part of 'the greatest effort made by French Cinema', as it is described.

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The 56th Salon des Indépendants has just opened. It contains 3,406 paintings in the icy immensity of the Musée de l'Art Moderne. If this huge mixture of all styles, academic, cézannesque, surrealist, were only sorted out into categories, one could see it better. Hieronimos Bosch has directly inspired a few of the artists. Not many have done war subjects. A small painting by Raymond Daussey is memorable: 'Hitler'—one of the malefic bellies that Bosch painted (with a swastika on its behind now) is overlaying man, but man fights back. Félix Labisse is another good painter; Georges Papazov and Léon Tutundjian (all three surrealist) are striking, the last with a startling creation of hands and fists blossoming on a Dali desert.

People are talking much about the three-man show at the Carré Gallery at 10 Avenue de Messine, where Bazaine, Estève and Lapicque hang harmoniously together, the style of all three somewhat cubistically contemporary. Best I liked Lapicque, but all will be appreciated in England. The painters were there in person and said to me: 'Tell them that French painting never ceased despite all the horror of the occupation'. They plied me with questions about our bombings. Did artists work through all of that? I told them: YES!

The Salon des Humoristes is open, with many Poulbots, 'after four years in exile in Paris itself', the Germans never having forgiven his drawings of the children they tortured during the last war.

Here in Paris posters are, as they have always been, a vital example of what the nation thinks, suffers and calls for. The 'Entre-Aide Française' one is eloquent in the form of a little boy making the V-sign on a background of ruins—help for the devastated regions. 'Where the train runs, life starts anew,' say those outside the Gare d'Orsay—the Société Nationale des Chemins de Fers is on the job. (Twelve more main line trains are starting again in a few days; more closed Métro stations opening all the time.



Prices in each are very much higher, too—'Et le prix du beurre, donc?' said the ticket collector . . .). All over Paris is the singularly moving poster of the gigantic knot of barbed wire planted aggressively on a faint background of prisoners.

The prisoners—on 1 January 1945, the 1,651st day of captivity, prisoners and deportees in Germany totalled 2,615,000. The large exhibition, 'Le Front des Barbelés' (Barbed Wire Front) sponsored in the Grand Palais by the Ministry of Prisoners, Refugees and Deported, reconstructs their life in the Stalags. Not a family without its dead, its prisoners, its deportee. Today, in the midst of all the disruption in Germany, God knows what is their lot. Pierre Seghers tells me direct news has come to him that many are so weak from near-starvation that they spend all the time lying down. Seghers, founder of the clandestine, widely known and remarkably good *Poésie* 40, 41 (and on, yearly), has published two anthologies of poems by French prisoners of war. Amongst them Pierre Unik, editor in 1936 of *Regards* for which I worked in Spain. Raymond Michelet, who contributed so very much to my 'Negro' Anthology, is a prisoner, too, both of them since the heavy fighting in 1940. And Robert Desnos, brilliant, vitriolic early surrealist, is a political deportee.

The Relève took in nobody, so the Germans man-hunted and deported. *Libres* is the name of the paper of these absent men; it started clandestinely two years ago. All the press prints the names of the hundreds freed by Allied and Russian advances. The prisoners are one of the greatest preoccupations of France today. Another poster says: 'Are you ready to welcome them back?' Each will receive 1,000 francs on arrival (while the total bonus is being fixed), food, clothing and medical care when necessary.

How often will it be necessary? One hears of the appalling amount of tuberculosis amongst them. Tuberculosis is another national problem. And what do doctors say of the nation's health? This, in brief:

A huge increase of tuberculosis, due to semi-starvation, malnutrition, generally bad ordinary conditions and clinical difficulties. Many cases of cancer. Syphilis ('tant qu'on voudra—as much as you please'). Various forms of anæmia. Chlorosis, last known on a big scale in the eighties, due to lack of iron in diet.

My own physician, Dr. Moline, of the Hopital St. Louis, told me: 'Of the 230 children examined by me this morning 200 had scabies. A similar proportion among adults. It all began on the roads of the exodus in 1940. Impossible to tackle this epidemic properly owing to lack of the right medicaments. Well, a good number of children will bear the mark for life of all they have been through. Mass sendings of condensed milk *and particularly of vitamin A* (cod-liver oil in any form), which is entirely lacking, would be a boon to the nation in present conditions. The cold of this winter, without any heating whatever, amounted to an illness, especially among the elderly. Penicillin! If only we could have some. Alas, not yet available save for military cases.' A maternity specialist told me: 'Child-bearing is somehow abnormal. The babies are ALL hyper-nervous, and numerous are the cases of *marasme* among women, extreme nervous depression, part-physical, part-moral, part psychic.'

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The Germans have massacred, tortured, blackmailed, attacked psychologically and done much more, but they have emphatically NEVER dominated the spirit of the men, women and children of France. They have tried to make people as corrupt as themselves (and in some cases Vichy Fascists could give the Germans lessons in baseness and vice—a pretty small minority of people, these, however, out of the 40 million beings who live in France). Everywhere, in every class and region, the Germans were met with fortitude, with dignity and stupendous self-sacrifice, with the real *noblesse d'ame* of a fine and extremely resurgent people. All will be well here with the right handling, that is to say, if only things, things of daily life foremost, are done with as much honesty and vision as possible. Life can be rebuilt fast, I am sure. It will be part of the national honour that is in every ordinary normal man and woman to do this.

And in the time, first, of amelioration, then of well-being that one hopes is on the way, friendship and a deeper feeling than ever for England will be evident. 'On a besoin l'un de l'autre—our countries need each other.' THAT is what has been said to me more than anything else during the course of the first fourteen days back in France.

10 May, Paris

MUCH of literary Paris met, by chance as it were, on the eve of Peace declaration, at the *Lettres Françaises*—France's now leading intellectual weekly founded under Resistance by the National Committee of Intellectuals. The occasion was that of a welcome to T. S. Eliot, planned some time before. Here one heard admiration for the new book by Elsa Triolet, *Le Premier Accroc coute Deux Cents Francs*, and how moved Aragon was by his recent visit to England. 'To my amazement', Aragon told me, 'I am accused of being *anti-British*! How can such a lie have come into currency? The aspect of the ruins in London made me actually cry. I have never had a thought against England.' Both Aragon and myself, be it said in parentheses, know how unfounded is this accusation. In a word: it stems from the planned policy of certain malcontents; its root is jealousy, with a certain political bias. (But I intend to bring the facts to light separately as they have considerable bearing not only on the life of letters but on that of our relations with the intellect of France and of Europe.)

*Les Lettres Françaises* groups many of the most brilliant of the men and women of Resistance. Here I saw Léon Moussinac, famous film and art expert, imprisoned by Vichy and almost annihilated by treatment received in the terrible camp of Gurs, which was made to house the International Brigaders in 1939. And Jean Lescure, of the Radio Emissions Françaises, and Georges Sadoul, editor of the literary review *Les Etoiles* (another paper founded clandestinely), and Pierre Seghers, ace of clandestine publishers, and Rolf Ubach, one of the best photographers of France and Belgium, and many more. The welcome news that *L'Age d'Or*, the Bunuel-Dali film, will again be available for showing, came then too. I have seen it since. Nothing of its strangely permanent 'message' is lost by a time-lag of 14 years.

The corner is turned. We are now on the threshold of an era of peace—of NOT-War, at any rate. People took it here, no doubt, quite differently to the way it came to London. There were no 'night-noises' here, remember, for a very long time. There was no war visible in this capital. One may prefer the English day and night risks to an all-pervading poison in *excelsis* here: the Black Market; and all of the mentality that goes with it. Well, that too will end. Professional experts like waiters, who have their pulse on the daily tide of prices, have rejoiced in telling



me: 'Already little signs are visible! Last week, coffee was offered this house at 1500 fcs. a kilo. This morning we declined to buy it at 600 fcs. Ah, but now, see, there is going to be *la concurrence* in prices—the Black Market men aren't going to have it all their own way much longer!' People are astounded at any life being so simple—such as ours—at not having to deal with Black Market. As soon as SOAP flows again down the sinks of the million kitchens over the dishes that have held the fresh products of country regions the silly *bobards* (the malicious lies that still try to divide humanity into *rival* nationalities) will come to an end. A million-square, a million-wide, a million-long was the yard-measure of human beings in sight everywhere on Armistice Day here—singing in Peace from noon till the dawn of the next day and keeping it up on their jeeps and feet and lorries throughout the next. All of these people are going to feel normal and free again soon—as soon as the prices go down because the wheels begin to go round again—the wheels that go by today at such a spanking rate bringing back hundreds and thousands of prisoners who will have the big say in France's immediate future.

#### A RECENTLY DISCOVERED ROUSSEAU

'LA GUERRE' is of Henri Rousseau's last period, after that of 'La Bohémienne' and 'Le Rêve'. It was shown in the Salon of 1895 and remained more or less unheard of since then until its present owner, Monsieur Etienne Bignou, of the Gallery of the same name at 8 Rue de la Boétie, acquired it during the course of this war. Needless to say, as this was under occupation, it was not then mentioned either publicly. It came into prominence again at the beginning of this year, 1945, when it was shown in Paris. Its present owner intends to keep it.

Rousseau made a lithograph of it for Rémy de Gourmont.

'La Guerre' is a long picture (at a guess, after seeing it, some five to six feet long by something like four to five feet high). It is extremely fine, and quite different in feeling from the best-known of the Douanier's works. Its surface immediately recalls that of the Dutch primitives. Tonality contains much rose, grey-green, earth-tones and predominant black; landscape background suggests Castille. The big blond man lying in the foreground is said to be the Douanier himself.

CURTIS FITZROY

## GLIMPSES OF GERMANY—I

Germany, 7 April 1945

SITTING in the empty lounge of a huge luxury hotel on the Rhine. It is seven in the evening. Around me there are empty rooms where there had once been balls and huge dinners. Crystal chandeliers just visible hanging in the semi darkness. A French boy in American uniform is playing on the piano in the deserted dark ball-room. There are five people in the whole place. The swing-doors of the main entrance open and a colonel walks through looking for something. He takes off his helmet and lays it on the reception desk where no one is serving. Vaguely he looks around, peers into the dining-room. He sees a British captain having a dark and silent meal, served by a Russian girl from Kharkov. I know, because I spoke to her. The major gets up and the colonel stops him in the hall. 'Who's in charge here?' The British major is sorry, he's just moving through himself. The colonel shrugs and walks up the wide golden staircase and is seen no more. In the kitchen there is a Belgian cook talking German to the waiter, who is German. A different girl with long hair is singing in Russian. Two muddy American drivers from an armoured outfit walk through the hall. They wonder if they can have rooms. Someone says 'Take them', and they walk upstairs to a suite. A Russian youth with an apron, called Kolya, from Taganrog, hurries between side-doors with two bottles of hock. The cellar is full of it, to be had for the taking. There is an atmosphere of finding things. Two soldiers pass through the hall to the writing-room carrying a case of wine. In the damp evening, guns are firing unsteadily. The German manager of the hotel takes a look in, wearing green sports hat with stag's brush. He has heavy tortoiseshell glasses and a big face. All sense of order has gone, and he is past caring. Vainly he clicks his heels to an indifferent officer, ignores a sergeant carrying a bottle of hock upstairs. The outfit that was here has gone, and the one that is going to move in hasn't yet arrived. I have a two-bedded room. Tomorrow I shall be sleeping somewhere else. The Rhine looks peaceful, it is spring, and white blossoms are blurred in the distant mist. This hotel was the one in

which Hitler met Chamberlain during the 1938 crisis. I have decided to write in the main hall because the other rooms are deserted and somehow terribly lonely. There is the feeling of suspended destiny, of the war laying itself down to die—but not where one is, somewhere else. We have passed through about ten utterly ruined rich Rhineland towns. Deserted, and the possessions spewed into the street. Heavy broken buildings. Nothing alive. An occasional church looks superficially whole, but is really a shell. The gunners and bombardiers have been most respectable in the midst of their business, and the churches are ugly as the hell round them. The Germans in the inhabited towns are calm, a little fascinated by the quantity and variety of our transport. They never look at us, we never catch an accidental smile. It is unostentatious but complete. We don't look at them much, and never speak. It is the end of a world, and one feels it intensely. Bad Godesberg. Tourist brochures. Broken bottles. Blank menu cards. Bottled cherries arrayed on dusty shelves. Heavy reams of unused paper such as this I'm using. No ribbon on the typewriter, so I'm using a carbon. 'Our Distinguished guests are reminded that each is personally responsible that the black-out regulations are strictly observed. The Direktion'. Avenues of rich middle-class villas dripping in the quiet spring rain. An old man with a black peaked cap wheeling a bicycle through his wire gateway. A bomb lies on the pavement, rusting, obscene in its isolated roundness, merd-like. Two negroes with carbines slung over their wet open shirts are leaning in the stucco porch of a square house in a clean garden. The piano was playing all day. The hotel is empty of guests who wouldn't have to pay anyway. Somewhere in the distance Patton's columns are in Bavaria. Back in Paris my girl is sitting in the Café Flore. Here there is the quiet of the centre of the vortex that has ruined the pin-point and is destroying in a widening circle around. Colonel Stevens just came in. He sat in a plush chair and I confided my restlessness. 'It's like the end of the day in a studio after they have been shooting an important scene', he said. 'Everyone has gone home. The props that are movable have been put away for further use. And three men who haven't gone home are sitting in the replica of the hotel where Hitler met Chamberlain.' As I was writing this, the colonel who I said disappeared, not to be seen any more, reappeared. He wore a raincoat with eagle insignia on the



shoulders. His underclothes showed through where the coat was unbuttoned, and he was in bare stockinged legs. He went over rather gloomily to the reception desk and lifted the receiver of a military telephone. He waited two minutes and realized it had been disconnected by the departed outfit that had installed it. He turned and went back to bed. By now the artillery in the distance has died away completely, and all that we hear is the occasional plop of a rifle shooting at floating objects that might be mines against our bridges.

Earlier in the day they raised the American flag over the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein at Coblenz, last occupied by U.S. troops in 1923. It was cold and there were a lot of Generals. It was an isolated ceremony, high up and curiously un-American in its conception, since no one was watching except the military itself; they raised the flag and there were speeches and military music. Below, the city of Coblenz with a broken statue of the Kaiser lay before a wide green hilly landscape that seemed suspended without animation in the mist. Lifeless, embalmed. Someone remarked that it had cost us a lot of men to take that flag down for twenty-two years. We drove back in the rain past the Rhine bridges lying broken-backed and still half submerged and with the wake of the river running white around the steel trellises, as if it had always been like that. In one place a dead German lay at the edge of the river, and the water flowed over the bleached featureless whiteness of where his face had been. His uniform was still the same green that it was meant to be. Just now the colonel found the telephone operator's guest-list for September 1938. The only clue was the blankness of two pages for the twenty-first and twentieth—but I have forgotten the date of Godesberg.

Now I am alone, and a little cold. Everyone seems to have gone to bed. No clock ticks, nothing moves.

It's a very strange adventure, unforgettable of course. The war going to bed after its busy day. The fever of Germany abating after a letting of blood. No feeling of working up to a sudden hysterical armistice.

8 April

Now very deep in Germany. The people look at us more. But what can they think—they who have military things so

close to their hearts? Do they think it fantastic that we have come so far over 3,000 miles of sea, or do they think us amateurs? My guess is they are very impressed. A man cried behind his window as a convoy of huge vehicles bumper-to-bumper crawled by for hours in the dust. 'Non-fraternization' is a good thing for the moment.

*JAMES LEES-MILNE*

## NINETEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL PASTICHEURS

### I

IT is encouraging to learn that the official mind has at last accepted the fact that British architecture as an art did not die a doornail death with Queen Anne in 1714; but that the works of such artists as the old Wren, the middle-aged Vanbrugh, of Kent, the Adams, the Wyatts and even Nash, may henceforth have official recognition (if not protection); that, in short, the Ministry of Works may extend its patronage down to the advanced date of 1850, for long advocated by the sophisticated, unofficial mind as even the furthestmost milestone of that long-flourishing, now desperately moribund national channel of the arts. Admittedly it is difficult to find after 1850 more than an accidental sprinkling of buildings in this country that can without prejudice be designated works of art.

If 1850 (and assuredly all dates are arbitrary) marks the end of British architecture, the beginning of the end is, I suppose, indicated when architects indulged in unashamed pastiche. It furthermore follows that the shorter lived each pastiche and the quicker the tempo of its change, the stronger the emphasis upon the end. Conveniently enough we have three well-known and well-defined nineteenth-century pasticheurs all of whom favoured a particular pastiche—each as different from the other as chalk from cheese—and died within four days of the same month of the same year. This was in December 1881.

Of these three architects, the most outmoded at the time of his death was Decimus Burton. He in his youth a highly popular because exclusive Grecian found himself by the time of his middle age so ridiculed and reprobated that rather than compromise with the new popular tastes, he retired and gave up practice altogether. Salvin, on the other hand, was a wobbler. In early youth a pronounced baroquist, he degenerated into a medieval revivalist, became dangerously addicted to castellating, but just had the grace not to compromise with the most intransigent demands of mid-Victorian fashion and rather faded out of the picture. Like most pusillanimous men, he was neither revered nor wholly despised. Street, the third of the three, on the other hand, succumbed wholeheartedly to the prevailing tastes, plunged headlong into Early English Gothic, and was consistently loved and honoured by all. But tides very quickly turn, and of the three there is no doubt whatever that the one we appreciate and admire today is Burton.

Decimus Burton (1800-81) was born into the full florescence of Soane's triumphant neo-Grecianism. He was an infant prodigy. His father, James Burton, a successful gentleman architect, trained his tenth-born and favourite son in the trim classic school so profusely patronized by the First Gentleman in Europe. Young Decimus's correct tastes were confirmed by early travel in Italy and, of course, Greece. In 1821 he launched into independent practice, and at the age of twenty-two was commissioned to help lay out the Regent's Park under John Nash. In 1823 his first major work, a Colosseum with dome excelling in girth that of St. Paul's Cathedral and containing a 'lift' of gigantic proportions and worked by water power, was well begun. James Elmes described the building as 'one of the greatest individual enterprises of which modern art can boast'. In his twenties he had completed Cornwall and Clarence Terraces, several villas in the Regent's Park, the Hyde Park lodges, the screen at Hyde Park Corner, and even begun upon his *chef-d'œuvre*, the Athenæum Club. He had already made a great and deserved name for himself.

In the 'thirties he rather concentrated upon enlargements to country houses, and before his star had much waned he left an indelible mark upon St. Leonards-on-Sea. In 1846, however, he distinctly met his Waterloo over a clash indeed with the great hero himself of that previous famous engagement. However



significant may be the year 1815 in the political annals of this country, the later date most decisively marks the triumph of Philistinism in England over architecture. Burton had designed his own quadriga to surmount his Hyde Park arch which still stands (though crowned by a later quadriga designed by Captain Adrian Jones), only today re-erected so as to face Constitution Hill. The Duke of Wellington would have none of it, and backed by popular clamour, the voice of official England and the Queen and Consort insisted upon an equestrian statue of himself taking the place of honour. Burton's protests were summarily overruled and the statue was hoisted upon the arch, to the architect's intense chagrin and the opprobrium of civilized Europe. A French officer taken to admire the result burst into pæans of hysterical laughter and, between his guffaws, managed to exclaim: 'Enfin, nous sommes vraiment vengés'. Burton never really asserted himself again, and retired into a prolonged dudgeon until death released him from a smug and barbarous world in his eighty-second year. Ironically enough, only two years after his death the statue was, with universal acclaim, removed to permanent obscurity amongst the conifers of Aldershot.

Anthony Salvin (1799-81), Burton's contemporary, was the son of a Durham General and spent his childhood beneath the shadow of Brancepeth Castle, where he became impregnated with the romance and chivalry of the Middle Ages. As a result of this he was to remain throughout a long life essentially a romantic. In 1820 he went to London with his childhood's companion, cousin and future brother-in-law, the soldier-painter of cascades, and amateur landscape gardener, William Nesfield. The two young men lived together, and soon consorted with other artists, notably Turner and Samuel Prout. The near influence of painting upon architecture is most frequently evinced in baroque tendencies, and the pictorial qualities of Salvin's work are everywhere manifest. The pity in Salvin's development was his hesitancy in adopting his mediums. Meant to be more than a mere regenerate medievalist, he just fell between the stools of baroquism and revivalism, while too soon abandoning the first altogether. The architect to whom he most closely approximates is without doubt Vanbrugh, but unfortunately he never had the same strength of personality, the same unswerving conviction of his own genius, the same resolution of purpose as that spirited artist.

This may be attributed perhaps to his early schooling in Nash's office, where he came under the impassioned tutelage of that elusive architectural 'ghost' and intransigent medievalist, the elder Pugin. Though a brief one in his development, the Pugin period is not, I think, without dark significance.

While still in his twenties, Salvin began upon a monumental work, which today wrongly inspires derision, Harlaxton Manor, near Grantham. In an article of this enforced brevity a full description of the astounding virtuositities of Harlaxton may not be indulged. Suffice it to say that in the entrance pavilions and gate piers to the west court we find perhaps the most exuberant and flowing baroque contours that the nineteenth century evolved in English domestic architecture. Nothing at all like them was to be seen until the Ritz school of architects came to the fore with their Louis Quinze revival in the Edwardian decade. The pavilions at Harlaxton are truly reminiscent of Vanbrugh. Salvin never again gave such absolute rein to this tendency, never elaborated it elsewhere. Like Vanbrugh he could not keep his hand off castles, but where Vanbrugh at Lumley, Grimsthorpe or Kimbolton Castles unashamedly imposed upon them an extraneous style unmistakably his own, Salvin at Longford, Dunster and Brancepeth Castles 'improved' as he thought upon the medieval so as to leave behind a nondescript flavour we so commonly taste in most Victorian hack restoration work. At Alnwick Castle it is true he provided in the 1850s a strangely imaginative assortment of cinque-cento and English Gothic, not without distinction. As a summary of Salvin's final development, where power and imagination fall short of great genius, we have Peckforton Castle in Cheshire. To see this castle for oneself is to understand Salvin's conception of building. From the foundations up it is entirely his own work, a carefully measured composition of masses of red sandstone, just a little half-hearted when seen from close to, but for all that quite striking from a distance, especially in the glow of a Turneresque sunset sky.

George Edmund Street (1824-81) came of a younger generation. Son of a solicitor, he never wavered. At the age of twenty he went to a celebrated studio of Gothic architecture in Spring Gardens, where he attracted the favourable notice of Gilbert Scott. Church building is what interested him from the start. Through a friendship with Bishop Wilberforce (Soapy Sam) he

became architect to the Oxford Diocesan Commissioners in his twenty-fifth year. Honour succeeded to honour with decent Victorian precision and regularity: first he became an A.R.A., then a R.A.; in 1868 he was appointed architect to the Law Courts after a great professional competition; in 1879 he succeeded Edward Barry as Treasurer to the Academy, subsequently rising to be its Professor of Architecture. He not only worked in England, Scotland and Ireland, he worked all over Europe, raising Protestant churches to the glory of God in Constantinople, Rome, Genoa, Lausanne and Murren. Everywhere he went he was flattered and esteemed. Not for one flickering instant did his contemporaries, whether patrons or professionals, question his superior style, his judgement or his taste. Yet Street's work coincides with the final and irrevocable departure from continuity of tradition in architectural good manners. From the first he lost no time in making up his mind which direction to take. He had no scruples. He did not slip hesitantly from the brink of Regency correctitude into the Victorian waters of indiscriminate and *laissez-faire*. Proudly and confidently he plunged, and in so doing he made a prodigious splash.

'We do not trouble ourselves', he wrote 'as to the origin of anything that is really good and interesting. If it comes from Venice, well; if from Lincoln, so much the better. . . . All of us must admit that it [the new museum at Oxford] is singularly attractive.' His self-confidence was naïve, robust and almost as attractive in its own special way as the new museum at Oxford. He certainly had his good qualities. He was a really profound scholar of Gothic the whole continent over and he was possessed of a demoniacal spirit for work. In his wide travels he studied from foundation to pinnacle every detail of 'really good and interesting' architecture, i.e. pre-Renaissance cathedrals and churches of the larger size—for he was inordinately snobbish—which he recorded laboriously in a hundred thousand competent sketches. So conversant was he with medieval detail that he could reproduce it in innumerable variations and so cunningly that he deceived the greatest experts. Scott in praising his completion of the unfinished Cathedral at Bristol mistook Street's detail for the original medieval work. His powerful digestive system became a machine, turning out on its own steam, for example, three thousand different profiles for mouldings alone, duly executed



upon the Law Courts. Such feats must command admiration. Yet the joke of the matter is that he was sincerely convinced of his own reticence in the use of ornament on his buildings, and took frequent occasion to exhort his students to emulate his example in this respect.

Among all his buildings Street's Law Courts, in the Strand, are pre-eminently his most famous. There they stand fortunately unscathed by German bombs, as truly reflecting the spirit of their age as does the Albert Memorial. We have by now passed beyond the fashionable stage of wilfully depreciating them, and whether we like them or not we cannot despise them, however justly we may the motives that inspired them. They have an undeniably romantic quality due not only to the snow-like texture of their beautiful Portland stone but to the accidental fantasy of their clustering Germanic pinnacles and spires.

A contemporary obituarist of Decimus Burton pondered over the waywardness of fashionable taste and after a very fair estimate of Burton's work wrote, as if by way of apology for what went before: 'Mr. Street himself would probably have scouted all reference to it, as exemplifying the work of architectural imbecility'. And then after referring to Street's incomparable Early English style, at that time inseparably associated by the *cognoscenti* and public at large with all that was proper in modern design and execution, he continued as follows: 'Are they sure that in the lapse of another generation of men, their own favourite *revived* phase of architecture may not appear as *passé* to their successors as Burton's architecture now appears to some of them?' Street did not in fact have to wait so long as one generation before he, too, ran the gauntlet of severe condemnation. Philip Webb, his favourite pupil, and Norman Shaw, were so affronted by the flagrant sacrifice of utility to outward appearances as displayed in the Law Courts, that they reacted violently, and ricocheted with gusto into yet another 'revived phase of architecture'—back again, in fact, slap into the arms of Queen Anne herself.

## II

Certainly the 1870s witnessed the perfectibility of Gothic plagiarism, the quintessence of refined copyism. No wonder the Revival came to an abrupt full stop, for it simply could not be improved upon by one crocket, and nothing is so soul-destroying to any movement as the utter fulfilment of its principles. Not,

however, that Street's principles coincided with those, for instance, of his immediate predecessor, Augustus Welby Pugin, who was no less ardent a Goth, nor of course with the more distant Wyattville, nor, say, the father of them all, Horace Walpole. There is no doubt that Street, whose cusps and crockets at Bristol deceived Gilbert Scott into mistaking them for genuine medieval, laughed at the clumsier efforts of Pugin, whose own pen-trays and umbrella-stands at Westminster, in spite of their advantage in the acquired age patina of a generation, could take nobody in. As for Wyattville, he was no purist and mixed his styles, whereas Walpole and his friends, like Sanderson Miller, who did not know the difference between Decorated and Perpendicular (and did not care) and whose imitations were feeble in the extreme, were beneath Street's contempt. But the real difference between Street's generation and Walpole's is that the one practised mechanical deception and the other did no such thing. When Walpole rhapsodized over the Library at Lee Priory as 'a most perfect piece of medievalism', and declared it to be just 'what an abbot may have had', he knew perfectly well that he was talking society nonsense and meant that the room was just what he would *like* an abbot to have had. He was not such a fool as to intend that his flimsy fan tracery at Strawberry Hill should be mistaken by posterity for the handiwork of the mason of the Henry VII Chapel, but Street did actually dare to suppose his own contemporaries might identify the provenance of the Law Courts with that of the west façade of Lincoln Cathedral. Walpole, and for that matter Pugin, who had a closer consanguinity with him than with Street, purposed to evolve their own version of the Gothic. Street unblushingly intended to reproduce the old.

And the old which the 1870 school unanimously agreed to be the only acceptable old was of course the Early Pointed Gothic. To them there was absolutely no alternative. The interesting process by which they arrived at this irrefutable dogma would repay prolonged study. At any rate the Decorated they deemed degenerate, and the Perpendicular frankly decadent and disgusting—notwithstanding its closer affinity with the Tudoresque, which on occasion they would swallow in small doses. The only problem which these Early Pointed exponents had to resolve was whether to adopt the English, French, German or Italian variety. Street, being a great Englishman and patriot, naturally chose the first, in

spite of a sneaking preference for the second which he suspected to be the better. Scott, generally speaking, chose the German and Charles Barry, when he was in the Gothic mood, favoured though he did not always prosecute the Italian. Other and lesser architects followed the English and continental interpretations fairly indiscriminately.

Notwithstanding his rigid insular prejudices, Street was widely travelled and widely cultivated and he quickly discerned that of the style to which he gave passionate allegiance France was the fountain head. The man, however, who most actively perpetuated the French Early Pointed in his own works was the lesser known Victorian architect Burges. Conveniently enough for this essay Burges was the fourth eminent architect also to die in the year 1881, although he had the humility to choose a different month, namely April, to the greater triumvirate.

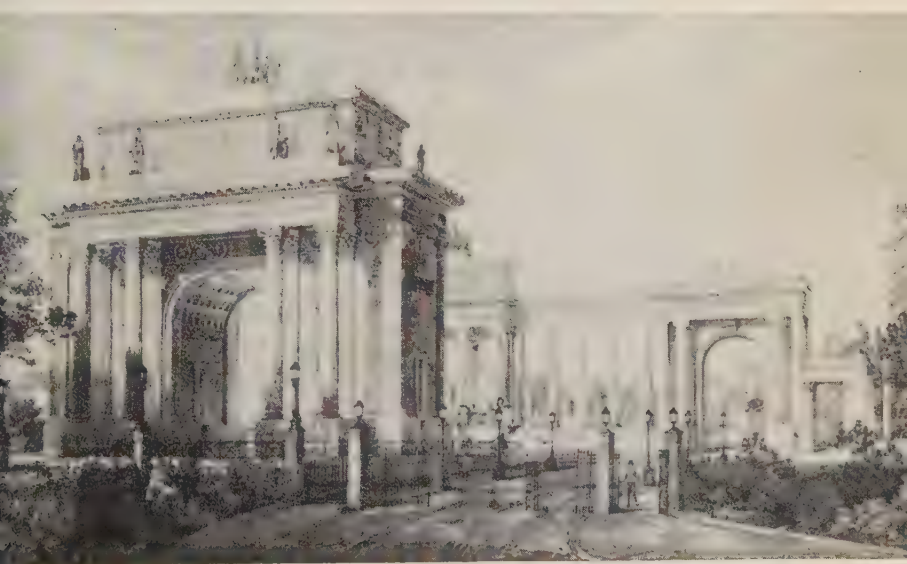
The year 1881 was momentous for the death, in Burton, of the last cobweb link with 'the vilest Renaissance of George III's time'; in poor Salvin, of another equally frail link with the traditional eclecticism (to be revived somewhat disastrously with 'Queen Anne') of a greater past; in Street and Burges of the Early Pointed stagnation, whether insular or continental.

None the less the Gothic Revival, as a widow mourning her Early Pointed husband, died hard. She meandered on into the twentieth century, now decking herself, once the sombre Pointed weeds were shed, in Sieneese, now Byzantine attire; under which disguise a splendid swan-song was sung by Bentley in the vermillion and white bricks of Westminster Cathedral. If Westminster Cathedral is an appendix to the Gothic Revival (and this is questionable), then it is one of its greatest credits. John Bentley (1839-1902) belonged to the next and post-Pointed generation, being a contemporary of Webb and Shaw, the two Queen Anners, but he never embraced their faith. He would in any era have ploughed a lonely furrow, being a marked individualist and above all driven by an inordinate love for the Catholic Church. That was the inspiration behind all his work, as it was behind Pugin's. The present Bishop of Chichester, in a recent lament that since the Reformation the Christian Church has ceased to be the supreme inspiration of the arts, should have qualified his statement a little. He is right in stating that the Church of England never since its inception inspired the same medieval fervour of





ANTHONY SALVIN. Peckforton Castle, Cheshire,  
from a water-colour sketch by the Architect



Arch and screen at Hyde Park Corner by DECIMUS BURTON,  
from a water-colour sketch by the Architect



art for God's sake as did the Church of Rome in England up till the Reformation and, indeed, has in modified form since the re-establishment of the Hierarchy in 1850.

Bentley, the son of a Yorkshire wine merchant, was an early convert. He tells us that the burning of Doncaster Church in his childhood deeply stirred him to a life devotion to build churches to the honour of the Almighty, and that not until the great nave of Westminster was established did he feel that the Doncaster disaster had in some way been atoned for by him personally. In common with all young Victorian architects he found his spiritual contentment in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, but he delved deeper than most, for he became obsessed by the medieval Catholic traditions of building-craft. After his appointment to undertake the Cathedral in 1894 he went straight to Italy and spent five months steeping himself in Byzantine study at Venice and Ravenna. During this period, surprisingly enough, he never made a single sketch but his impressions were so indelibly recorded in his mind that straightway on his return to Cardinal Vaughan he then and there dashed off in his presence the design for the Cathedral which was never substantially altered. With the unflagging and fanatical enthusiasm of the devotee, Bentley—and how this is reminiscent of Pugin—worked himself, day and night, to his death. And so he died, before his great work was finished, in harness. 'His spectacles and pencil were left upon the unfinished drawing, when, later in the afternoon, he passed out of his office for the last time.'

Perhaps Bentley was the last of the Great Gothic Revivalists and, although Westminster Cathedral can claim to be real and functional, yet it can no more be absolved from pastiche than the works of his immediate predecessors, contemporaries and, as we shall see, of his successors.

By the 1880's 'Queen Anne' was indeed the rage. Burges and the old school might call it 'negro-language'. Oscar Wilde and the young aesthetes on the contrary hailed it as the birth of a New Renaissance. Alas, it was doomed not to wax into a mature evolution nor even to run its full course as had after all the Gothic Revival. Not quite abortive, it is true, 'Queen Anne' lived unproductively and died almost as sterile as the Early Pointed. The war of 1914 directly brought about its demise just as the war of 1939 has presumably extinguished the pathetic embryological



struggles of the inter-war Functionalism, which never healthily drew breath. The 1881 deaths meant not of course the genesis of 'Queen Anne'; but that the last obstructions in the weir had been removed, and so allowed the pent-up flood of 'Queen Anne' to surge through the open locks. What indeed is the cause of any movement? The effect is invariably hastened by the weight of reaction against the preceding phase, once it is played out. What, rather, we may more profitably wonder, did its champions exactly mean by 'Queen Anne'? We may only judge from the works of the acknowledged Queen Anners themselves, chief of whom were Webb and Shaw. Dr. Pevsner has traced the germ of the movement to Nesfield's Kinnel Park, 'an enormous building in the classic style', erected by him in 1866. This is possible, and William Eden Nesfield (1835-88), an Etonian dilettante rather than a professional architect, is a curious participant in the new movement. Nesfield, like his uncle, Salvin, was greatly influenced in his pictorial fancies by his father, the painter. He was an early associate of Shaw but a too-gentlemanly upbringing and a consequent loathing for the light of common day would not permit him to illustrate his works so that he sank into early oblivion and died middle-aged. I much prefer to attribute the germ of 'Queen Anne' to Webb's famous Red House, at Bexley, which he designed for William Morris as early as 1859.

The building, however, which the young revolutionaries acclaimed as embodying all the principles of 'Queen Anne' and which the æsthetes upon lecture platforms in the U.S.A. upheld as the pattern of the movement, was Shaw's New Zealand Chambers in Leadenhall Street, begun in 1871. In the words of the late Sir Reginald Blomfield, 'Shaw set the architectural world agog by a violent break with the tradition of the City. He produced a completely revolutionary design. . . . Instead of the decorous but dull façades (Early Pointed) of the normal business premises of the time, Shaw turned his back on precedent, and into the midst of the sombre stone and stucco of the City had the audacity to introduce red brick and ornamental plasterwork.' It was the red brick and the ornamental plasterwork that set the architectural world agog and which by its violent break with tradition so wounded the susceptibilities of Burges that he was forced to employ the opprobrious epithet, 'negro-language'. But apart from this red brick, the coarse texture of which is as far

unlike the original as is Burges's pitchpine from the oak pews of the thirteenth-century craftsmen, in vain do we recognize any of the elements of the genuine Queen Anne. Certainly they do not lie in the 'ornamental plasterwork' in Leadenhall Street, for that clumsy strapwork interpretation approximates somewhat to Jacobean parge moulding in the East Anglian counties: certainly not in the bow-fronted Venetian windows (too lavishly duplicated in the inter-war period by Boots Cash Chemists), which are poor attempts at reproducing their Carolean prototypes upon the façade of the Old Sparrowe's House, Ipswich: nor surely in the top-heavy door pediment which would have appalled Inigo Jones in King Charles I's day. It is just conceivable that Sir Christopher Wren might recognize—though he would hardly be flattered by the compliment—the lopsided *œil-de-bœuf* window practically on pavement level, and he must expostulate upon the anachronism of the two Regency shop fronts which Sir John Soane would never have balanced so precariously over the area railings. But perhaps we should not be so particular.

What does matter more about the resurrected 'Queen Anne' is the implication of it. The revolt of the Queen Anners did allow emancipation from a too strict stylism. The *volte face* from the exclusive Early Pointed led to regained liberties, only comparable to the restitution of democratic rights to liberated countries after Nazi occupation. The change of styles did admittedly allow liberty to all to interpret Queen Anne as they thought fit and led to that eclecticism Burges had so much dreaded, for, as he had portended, it only resulted in a farrago—if we may borrow that phrase to describe the abortive birth throes of the 1920s and 'thirties. This sudden eclecticism was a bit too formidable for a profession accustomed to the dictatorship of George Edmund Street, just as a too drastic diet of democracy last autumn threw the Athenians into a fair disorder.

There is no doubt that Webb and Shaw were the two most important men to lead the revolt and break loose from the bondage of the Victorian architectural despotism, as we now see it. It is not easy yet to ascertain whether they themselves were *fin-de-siècle* merely or meant to be the progenitors of something new, which has been ruthlessly truncated by the two wars before having time to develop and which now lies hibernating during the present storms and may still arise to complete its cycle. It is a little

difficult at this stage to suppose so and it is too early to judge, but history offers no previous experience of the traditional thread, once broken, having been reassembled during the same civilization. A man like Sir Reginald Blomfield would indignantly refute any supposed correlation between what he called 'modernismus' or the inter-war farrago, and the august names of Webb and Norman Shaw. To him and his generation they were the last of the Titans. It does not perhaps matter very much. Actually the two men in their lifetimes were not very closely associated, and they never collaborated in a professional manner. Webb certainly admired Shaw, though it is not so certain that Shaw particularly admired Webb. They were exact contemporaries, both having been born in 1831, and they died within three years of each other in the second decade of the present century. Webb was essentially an artist and from the beginnings of the Brotherhood belonged to the Pre-Raphaelites. He had the imagination, and paved the way. Norman Shaw was more of a realist and a practical genius. Webb would at times, succumbing to the narcotic generalities of his friend, William Morris, be lost in a miasma of topsy-turviness, whereas Shaw never lost sight of the goal—once it was pointed out to him—and is the one who directed the trend of the movement, through the very forcefulness and quantity of his output. The character of each is best reflected in his work. Webb's buildings are uniformly picturesque and fanciful: Shaw's, towards the end of his career, at any rate, far more classical and direct. Both had of course been born, bred and schooled in the prevailing Gothic.

Philip Webb (1831–1915), the son of an Oxford Doctor of Medicine, was apprenticed as a young man to a Reading architect. Having gained his rudimentary ground work he returned to the city of his birth and of his lasting affection and loyalty, where in 1852 he became an assistant to Street. In Street's office he first met—in 1856—that recalcitrant, rebellious, bouncing pupil, young William Morris, a 'slim boy', he afterwards described him, 'like a wonderful bird just out of his shell.' The assistant and pupil struck up a friendship based upon a common devotion to the arts as practised outside office hours, and discovery of the works of John Ruskin. For Street, Webb felt gratitude and admiration tinged with pity. 'He was everything that was honourable, and industrious beyond words, a very able architect according to his



lights,' which were of course exclusively of the narrow Early Pointed variety. Webb at this early age realised that Street was mistaken in barking up the wrong, solitary, tree. Morris, of a less forbearing and tolerant disposition, frankly despised his master for presuming that modern medievalism could be a workable proposition. And so the two young men soon left him and transferred their allegiance to Ruskin whom they regarded as master and teacher, not only in matters of art, but in all the realms of life. Their greatest debt to Ruskin was the lesson learnt that art was the expression of man's pleasure in labour.

In 1857 the famous but ephemeral wall paintings at the Union Debating Society hall were executed and Webb gave help on the roof decoration in his spare time. A tour by himself followed to the northern cathedrals and again in Morris's company down the Seine in a leaky rowing-boat. In 1859 Webb designed his first, and as it transpired, possibly the Victorian era's first architectural pioneer work in the Red House at Bexley for Morris. To our eyes, accustomed to the genteel, post-Gothic, pre-1914 country seatlets of Lutyens and his followers, the Red House, detached from its date seems a prosaic affair. There is nothing to us unconventional about its design, its style or its material. But to Morris and his unconventional associates it was a revolution; to Rosetti, for example, 'more a poem than a house, such as anything else could lead you to conceive'. The Red House was, then, at the time of its building something unique. To begin with, it was of naked red brick, when for the last fifty years brick had been decently concealed by plaster and stucco, and its roofs were covered with honest tiles, instead of slates. Above all, it was planned with a view to accessibility of room to room. Inside there were plain brick fireplaces, the walls were covered in coloured woollen hangings embroidered with sprigs of flowers. The garden was the first known of the modern square plot and trained hedge type. At the Red House the young Brotherhood habitually met: here they discussed the arts, socialism and life, and the future programme of their movement: here they had battles with soda-water syphons and afterwards sewed up Topsy in his waistcoat while he slept.

In 1861 Webb became an original member of the 'Firm' at Red Lion Square and produced several of the cartoons for Morris's tapestries, for he was a competent draughtsman, especially of animals, and then supervised the stained glass

department. As a member of Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Webb always informed 'Anti-Scrape' before he undertook work on an old building and faithfully adhered to its principles. This allegiance, which would have irked and might altogether have antagonized a greater creative artist is one example of Webb's outstanding integrity and humility. Another was his deeply sincere socialism which he practised in the least ostentatious yet most convincing manner possible, and which he ever subordinated, or rather reconciled to the demands of his art.

Professor Lethaby was convinced that Webb did for English architecture what Browning did for poetry: to revitalize it by returning to contact with reality—and this most certainly is what he attempted to do. In comparing his achievement with those of his predecessors, Street and his school, one is at first almost persuaded that he succeeded. A further study reveals that he fell far short of his ideal. Webb's houses were honest and they are picturesque. One of his best country houses is Joldwyns (1873) in Surrey, gay, homely, traditional (in the English manor sense), and craftsmanlike—commendable adjectives, but not the attributes of Michelangesque genius. Clouds (1881-6) in Wiltshire, his most ambitious house, shows greater imagination, deeper feeling and more developed mastery of the principles of building: but, we must face it, it is a regurgitated hotch-pot of Flemish Renaissance-cum-Carolean romanticism, formless, fussy and artistically gelid.

'A very able man indeed, but with a strong liking for the ugly', was Shaw's verdict upon Webb. Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) was a very much bigger man indeed than his contemporary, a less nice man perhaps, but with an even stronger liking for the ugly. To put it mildly, the trouble with the Queen Anners, not excluding Sir Edwin Lutyens, their successor, was their very negative sense of the beautiful, and their too frequent lapse into the pretty. In this respect they were inferior to the Early Pointed protagonists, who were at least romantic. At least, poor things, they strove to reproduce beauty of a sort. The Queen Anners, on the contrary, rejected such intellectual motives, and this formed the strength of their reaction and the weakness of their achievement.

Shaw first of all worked for seven laborious years under William Burn, where in 1851 he met W. E. Nesfield, the Etonian

dilettante. On attaining his majority, he, like the rest of them, travelled on the Continent and returned with a burning enthusiasm for the Gothic, and above all for the French cathedrals. It is astonishing how the young nineteenth-century architects seldom thought it worth their while to persevere as far south as the Mediterranean, far less to the land of Vitruvius and Palladio, which their eighteenth-century predecessors had found such easy going. But Shaw himself was a man with High Anglican leanings, and a healthy disrelish for Roman. In 1858 he published his *Architectural Sketches from the Continent* in which not one classical detail is featured. About this time he, too, entered Street's office where he succeeded Webb as Street's principal draughtsman and stayed there until 1862. He had no patience whatever with the hallucinatory ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites, cordially disliked Morris and considered Webb woolly. Street, his master, he found a taskmaster, who allowed his subordinates no self-expression of any kind. 'He would not', he complained, 'let us design a key-hole', so jealous was the older man of the Early Pointed heritage to which he considered himself heir supreme, and it was resentment that drove the younger to seek salvation in fresher fields and pastures new.

Shaw's stricture, written at a later date, upon Street is, like Webb's, not without significance: 'Street would not compromise anything and so he built the Law Courts. As a faithful reproduction of Gothic the Law Courts are far superior to the Houses of Parliament, but somehow or other the latter are more adapted to modern requirements.' At the end of his life he looked back upon the Gothic yearnings of his predecessors and of his own youth with complacent condescension: 'It was always supposed', he wrote, 'that Gothic was to develop, and there was any amount of tall talk as to what it was to do, but it didn't do anything. It was like a cut flower, pretty to look at, but fading away before your eyes.' And so Shaw, too, who had no natural sympathy for cut flowers, independently, and for different reasons to Webb's and Morris's which were ideological, turned his back upon the Early Pointed. Those office restrictions under Street were more than pululating flesh and blood could bear with equanimity.

Cautiously Shaw broke away. In 1862 he set up partnership with Nesfield in London, and the two of them turned out early Tudor dwellings with plenty of half-timbering in the gables.



Tiles they used for the roofs and weather-tiles for the upper surface of walls whose skirts were honest brick or stone. As yet there were no signs of anything classical. The partnership lasted till 1868 when the lethargic Old Etonian withdrew, not without promptings, and Shaw found himself alone but on a firmer wicket. Now he was really independent and for a while still indulged his immature taste for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and sham black and white which he loaded for their picturesque, and expensive, effect upon the faces of his suburban palaces. Of an unpoetical disposition and more practical minded than Webb, he was a greater success with the barons of high finance—he was no socialist—and of commerce. He had become par excellence the architect of country mansions for the rich or the vulgar.

It must not be supposed that Shaw was in consequence no artist, although his worldly if undiscerning eye points to his being less of a scholar. In spite of his worldly success at this period Shaw was not and never did become commercial minded himself, a charge which he constantly levelled against the R.I.B.A. and on account of which he resigned from that Institute in 1872.

We have already postulated that it was Webb who under the influence of Morris and others of the Pre-Raphaelite band unconsciously inaugurated the 'Queen Anne' movement with the Red House, Bexley, so early as 1859. Kinmel Park in 1866 and doubtless a few other non-Gothic buildings followed suit throughout that decade. By 1872 Shaw's New Zealand Chambers had set the architectural world agog and the Early Pointed tongues a-wagging. By the end of the 'seventies 'Queen Anne' was a recognized term that had come to stay and Burges was calling it 'negro-language'. By the 1880s it was the accepted mode and Webb and Shaw its acknowledged protagonists.

Shaw's output was prodigious, especially in London, but we have only to take five of his most successful country houses from which to judge, if we can ever define it, the style of the best 'Queen Anne'. In 1876 comes Pierrepont, in Surrey. Here we see a long, low house of two storeys and an attic. There are five pointed gables in a row above mullioned windows. The whole façade is of close half-timber work, complete with overhangs in the late medieval manner. The base of the face is of rough stone. There is a half-timbered lantern, tall brick Tudor chimneys and some buttresses. The plan is nicely irregular. It might be Moreton

Old Hall (Cheshire) reproduced (only in Surrey). Pierrepont is in fact unadulterated Queen Elizabeth, outside and in, where it especially abounds in whimsicalities, mottoes and wise saws of ye olde rustick variety, such as the prominent inscription around the stone lintel of the hall fireplace—'A cosy ingle where true heartes mingle'.

Bryanston in Dorset for Lord Portman belongs to the year 1890 and yet at this date we have not reached, to our way of thinking, anything approximating to Queen Anne. Bryanston consists of a large central block with wings set right and left on the garden side. The centre block was modelled on Sir Roger Pratt's Coleshill (1655). The whole house is on a magnificent scale. It is undeniably impressive with its plain brick and zebra white stone dressings in staring relief.

Finally, in 1891, we come across a country house that might almost derive from the genuine Queen Anne, if only the touch of Vanbrugh—so unrepresentative of his age—were as strong as is the distinct emphasis of the later Carr of York. It is Chesters in Northumberland, built for a Newcastle magnate. Sir Reginald is right in saying that it is amongst the best things Shaw ever did. It was probably only eclipsed by his designs (never carried out because of official philistinism) in 1905-8 for the Piccadilly Quadrant. 'He had shaken off the anxiety for picturesque effect . . . here at length Shaw attained that for which he had been subconsciously searching all his life, the quiet dignity of the eighteenth century . . . . When he designed Chesters, Shaw had completed the circle.' He was in his sixtieth year and near the end of his professional career, and yet this Queen Anner had only just reached (through a process of uninspired plagiarism in running through the gamut of the medieval, Elizabethan, Jacobean, Carolean and Georgian, and in skipping nothing except possibly Queen Anne itself), 'what he had been subconsciously searching all his life.' The result, in itself competent indeed, was what John Carr of York, one of our lesser eighteenth-century architects, had without the same breathless experience many times excelled in the provinces. It is not as if this painful transition had established a safe platform upon which the generation after Shaw could evolve and develop an original and indigenous style of which England might be proud. Not at all. His successor, Lutyens, who has rightly been acclaimed the first of his generation

of architects and quite absurdly the greatest builder since Wren, repeated step by step the same hackneyed course through every conceivable phase (but including Queen Anne this time pretty extensively) except the Gothic, and arrived at not one step further ahead.

I cannot point the moral more clearly or courageously than Richard Norman Shaw himself. This is how he summed up the situation at the end of a long lifetime: 'We have now no proper traditional architecture, for it died away imperceptibly at the beginning of the last century. We were then at a loose end and were thrown back upon the past. Many most intelligent and even brilliant men tried in perfect good faith to revive a style that was dead and extinct—the Gothic style . . . the revival was carried on with enormous vigour and energy, and with something approaching genius. . . . We were trying to revive a style which was quite unsuited to the present day. . . . The Gothic revival, for all practical purposes is dead, and the tendency of late years [he wrote in 1902] has been to return to the English Renaissance. . . .'

'There was no Gothic revival in France, the French stuck to their own traditions; whereas we in England are groping in the dark. The French start with a scheme, and it is my feeling that we shall never do any good until we have one. The French have laid out great plans and carry them out bit by bit, and it does not matter if they do not complete them for a hundred years. But we know nothing of this in England. We live from hand to mouth.'

## HERBERT READ

# ON JUSTICE

JUSTICE is blind in her ancient personification (popular even in Christian iconography), and is represented as holding, as well as a sword, a pair of scales. She stands impartially between conflicting claims, sees nothing, but weighs everything.

This concept assumes that conflicting claims arise only between persons. The symbol does not fit the complexities of modern civilization, where, more often than not, the person is in conflict with the State. There then enters into the idea of Justice, even



unto replacing it, the idea of Retribution, originally the punishment inflicted by a revengeful God, in whose place the State now reigns supreme. The scales are no longer appropriate, and all that remains of the symbols of justice is the sword; and it is the sword which, in fact, is suspended above the Judge's head at the Old Bailey.

Nevertheless in its evolution, European jurisprudence has been conscious of this anomaly and we have evolved, especially here in England, not merely separate concepts of law, which we call Common Law on the one hand, and Civil or State Law on the other hand, but also the very precious independence of the judiciary. That independence may by now be more in name than in substance, as I shall attempt to show, but at any rate it is a recognition of distinct values.

Most people go through life without coming into immediate contact with the judicial system. The greater part of those who do have a direct experience of its workings are only concerned in minor misdemeanours which do not raise any questions of principle. For the most part, unless we are directly implicated, for all we know of it, the legal system might operate in another planet. A case has to be sordid, sexual or sadistic before the popular Press will consider it worth while to report. To serve on a jury is an initiation into the system, but it falls to the lot of few of us, and one service seems to ensure almost a life-time's exemption. Still fewer people, unless they are implicated, attend the Courts as disinterested observers, and nothing is done by the ushers and other court officials to encourage the public to attend. Indeed, judging by my own recent experience, there is a deliberate attempt to keep people out of the Courts.

The independence of the judiciary is symbolised in various ways. By means of wigs and gowns, the participants are dehumanized to an astonishing degree. If by chance, in the course of pleading, a hot and flustered barrister lifts his wig to mop his brow, an entirely different individual is revealed. It is as if a tortoise had suddenly dispensed with its shell. The whole business is carapaceous: a shell of custom and formality against which life, plastic and throbbing, beats in an effort to reach the light.

In such a system human values are at a discount: in their endless variety they have to be passed through a sieve of predetermined pattern. If they are too large or too shaggy, they get caught in the meshes.

The jury system is an attempt to admit human values: it is a safety-valve for emotional forces. To all rationalists and planners, it is an intolerable anomaly, and should be abolished. But before we abolish it, it would be well to recall to mind the reasons which Henry Fielding advanced in its favour.<sup>1</sup> A jury may be stupid, prejudiced, sentimental, but its main effect is to temper justice with mercy. The only occasion on which I myself served on a jury, I was outraged by the purely sentimental considerations which swayed my companions. I tried to stand out against them, to reason from the evidence (as the Judge had done in his direction). But I was in a minority of one: I was overwhelmed. The miscreant got off free. I have lived to rejoice in my defeat, because I now realize that the values which swayed the jury (appeal of youth, force of personality, sympathy for human weaknesses) were greater than the letter and the logic of the law. Only a jury has a right to assert such values. For the system of law to take them into account would negate that system. A system must be rigid. It is our peculiar wisdom in England to create a system as exact as the symbolical scales, and at the same time to throw a little sand into the bearings.

So long as Justice mediates between persons, the independence and integrity of the judicial machinery make for a judgment based on natural law. Common law is essentially the common feeling of what is right and just, as between the members of a community. Values (i.e. the common feelings in question) may change more rapidly than the laws which express them: but this is the fault of the community itself, which is not quick enough to ensure that its laws express its will. In morals and in property rights, the law tends to express the will of the conservative mass, the mere inertia of the unaffected and the indifferent. The laws against sexual perversion, for example, are harsh and unjust, because they do not recognise natural facts scientifically established. Since the majority of people are not homosexual, they find it difficult to legislate for a minority which is physiologically or psychologically distinct.

These are the inevitable complexities of any social group, and can be removed by patient analysis and publicity. The real danger in our judicial machinery comes when the cause lies between an individual and the State. Then the law which in the other case was

<sup>1</sup> A charge delivered to the Grand Jury, Westminster, 1794.

based on a sense of values (natural rights) suddenly changes and becomes a code of implacable edicts. Statutory law may need clarification and interpretation, but in intention it is absolute—an exact rack upon which individuals, in all their variety, must be stretched.

Watch the conduct of a public prosecution. The whole procedure and atmosphere of the court has changed. The accused stands in the dock, no longer to be judged as a man who may have wronged another member of the community, but as an individual who, perhaps all unconsciously, may have broken a rule or regulation. His intention or motive does not weigh a feather's weight in the symbolic scales of Justice. Facts, and facts only, deflect the needle. The gowns are ruffled, the wigs are scratched, only to make a point in logic or in exegesis. The man in the dock sits helpless, and the endeavour of his counsel is often to keep him out of the witness-box for fear the truth might complicate the issue. It is not that he wishes to deceive the judge or the jury: the game must be played according to the rules, with white pawns on one side, black on the other. A green pawn, an unaccountable fragment of life or emotion, is out of place in the checkered board.

Take a simple case, which happens to be a true case and a recent one. In the state of emergency which arose at the beginning of the war, certain Defence Regulations were rushed through Parliament and thus became part of the law. They were deemed necessary at that time and in the desperate circumstances of war and imminent invasion. But once in force, those Regulations, perhaps hastily drawn up and certainly ill-considered, have to be administered *to the letter*: as rigid edicts. One of the Regulations makes it an offence to attempt to disaffect from their duties members of any of H.M. Armed Forces. In other words, in a state of national emergency, it is not permissible to persuade soldiers or sailors to desert their posts.

We all know what was the intention of such a regulation, but there it stands, No. 39A in a verbal code, to be administered by the judicial system.

A group of men and women believe that war is an evil thing which must be eliminated from our civilization if we are not all to perish. They realize that war is not something which can be abolished by Act of Parliament, or even by International Agreement. It

is a deep-seated disease of civilization itself, the product of frustration and mass-neurosis. The cure is drastic—it is revolutionary. In order, therefore, that the world may be saved for their children, that it may have a fair chance of progressing towards peaceable and creative activity, this group of men and women advocate a drastic change in our society—in the terrorist cliché of the Press, they ‘preach revolution’. They preach it openly, to every comer, at all street corners and in such journals and pamphlets as they can print. Some of these publications reach members of the Armed Forces—actually, for the most part, members of the Non-Combatant Corps, which is not armed. The person has no privacy in the Forces: he is subject to periodic searches or inspections, and in the course of these, some of the pamphlets in question are discovered. A lever is pulled: the machine begins to move and in due course delivers the aforesaid group of men and women into the dock of the Central Criminal Court.

They are skilful and diligent citizens, all of them—that is irrelevant. They love truth and justice—that is irrelevant. In their daily avocations they do good and useful actions—tend the sick and wounded, build roads and railways—all that is irrelevant. There is a Code, and it has a clause, 39A. That clause says plainly that no one (at any time, during the legal existence of that clause) must preach any doctrine which *might* cause any member of H.M. Armed Forces to think twice about his duty to die. It is not necessary that one such disaffected person should be produced—all that the State need prove is that action was taken which might have led to one such case of disaffection.

Away with motives and intentions, away with every human feeling and idealistic hope. We are in a court of law and a man is being measured against a code. It does not matter what kind of man he is—a Messiah or a Thief: for the moment he is a piece of evidence, a neat bundle of ascertained *facts*, and these only will be measured against the inflexible code. Thus Christ went to the Cross, and Martyrs to the Stake: thus millions were packed like cattle into trucks and sent to Siberia or Poland. It is always the same pattern—human values against the edicts of Authority, of the State. And once the machine begins to move, it is difficult to stop it. All the engineers and technicians disclaim responsibility. They are busy oiling their little wheel and are proud when it



runs smoothly. What ghastly grist is in the mill is no concern of theirs—literally, NO CONCERN.

In the Central Criminal Court the case is over. The wigs change places. The prisoners leave the dock. A new defendant takes their place—a negro who is to be tried for manslaughter. It is all in a day's work—thieves and messiahs, murderers and prostitutes, embezzlers and aborters. A cynic might describe it as society with the lid off, the whole seething cauldron of man's good and evil impulses. But here in the court we are present rather at a vast attempt to put the lid *on*—all these sinister figures in black and crimson robes being so many presiding witches. And that is, of course, the exact and the melancholy truth. Here in this immense centralized cauldron 'the officers of the Crown' are attempting, brutally if necessary, to *suppress* the horrid mass of pullulating sinners, and are only dimly aware that the scene is so horrid, precisely because it is so concentrated—that if the writhing mass were to be *dispersed* and given space and light, it might be reanimated, rectified, by the agencies of human love and divine grace, which operate where two or three are gathered together, but not in a crowd. Justice, like everything else, is suffering from centralization, from concentration and suffocation.

This concentration is in correspondence with the whole social structure—a parallel development—but it gets its peculiar quality from that very independence of the judiciary which is its redeeming feature. The legal profession is a closed society, a securely protected and clearly differentiated guild within the greater society of the nation. It is invested with ranks and dignities, customs and precedents, robes and rituals. As a result, there grows up within this closed society a feeling of solidarity and mutual understanding which makes of their social function a highly skilled game which only the qualified can play. In any case, as between the counsels for prosecution and for defence, there is never more than an artificial war. If emotion is betrayed on either side, it is immediately disengaged, pilloried, petrified, and becomes one more counter in the game. The Judge sits up above, a referee in this match of wits: the defendant, whose innocence or liberty is the gage, is often reduced to insignificance: *he does not matter*: the point of law is the reality.

The Judge is independent; the Attorney General who is prosecuting and the Defending Counsel are playing the game,

according to the complicated rules. But they and their kind made the rules, for the kind of world they know and experience—a world of property and finance, of universities and clubs, of dinner-parties and fox-hunts. According to their experience, they made the rules with fairness, with honest intentions. They want to be just to the working-classes, to the negro and the prostitute. But it is very difficult to legislate for a world you only know at second hand. A brilliant barrister may be able to project himself into the mind of his client—a feat of empathy rather than of sympathy—but that is the exception, and is not even then all-embracing. There are heights and depths of experience which are simply beyond the average upper middle class barrister's conception: worlds of spiritual exaltation and self-sacrifice; worlds of poverty and suffering, worlds of self-abasement and despair. Before the exponents of such experience, the average Judge and barrister can but follow the example of Pilate and *wash his hands*.

There is justice in the underworld: read a book like *Street Corner Society* and see how it is organized, how it works. Men are naturally just when they form spontaneous groups—to play, to explore, to debate, even to steal. How beautiful is the justice which spontaneously emerges in a boatful of shipwrecked mariners! There is justice in prison camps and in any community of slaves. Man in society is naturally just, because society, if it is real, is a bond of mutual consideration. It is man reduced to a unit, a cipher, who no longer has a sense of justice. He is anonymous, independent, indifferent. He does not feel even the cohesive emotion of a wolf-pack. He is alone, and against him is the State: that complex of laws, rules and regulations which have no reality for this cipher-individual, in whose making he did not participate, whose meaning he may not understand. 'Thou shalt not kill'—that is a commandment which any man can understand: it is a crime against another man, and a sin against God. But 'Thou shalt not speak of universal peace and brotherhood'—that is a commandment which no man can understand unless he has a black heart. That is a commandment which cannot pass between one person and another, but only between the State and its anonymous citizens.



# p o l e m i c

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